

**Bronwen Findlay, Yinka Shonibare and Joanna Smart: Approaches to  
Pattern and Form in Contemporary Artists' Practice**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Art in Fine Arts, Centre for Visual Art, University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg.  
September 2017

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## Declaration

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art in Fine Arts, in the School of Arts, Centre for Visual Art at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa.

### I, Joanna Smart, declare that:

1. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This dissertation has not been admitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature



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Names and signatures of supervisors

Date

19 September 2017

## Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes to my supervisors, Doctor Faye Spencer and Doctor Louise Hall, for their kind patience and guidance during the course of my research.

Special thanks are given to Ms Bronwen Findlay for communicating with me and sending articles on her exhibitions.

I wish to thank Ms Elmar du Plessis for giving me vital information on the collection of Basotho blankets at the National Museum of Bloemfontein. Furthermore, I wish to thank Ms Elmar du Plessis for providing me with visuals of Basotho blankets and the exhibition of Basotho blankets at the Oliewenhuis Art Museum in 2014.

The financial assistance of the Centre for Visual Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, through the support of the Rita Strong Scholarship towards this Master's degree and associated research, is hereby acknowledged and I confirm that the opinions expressed, content and conclusions determined are my personal submissions as those of the artist/author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Visual Arts and/or the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The financial assistance of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, through the support of a Postgraduate Scholarship Award, is acknowledged.

Thank you to Mr John Cameron who helped with editing this dissertation.

I wish to thank my family for their support of my artistic career and their encouragement in my pursuit of this research. Special thanks to Julian Clarke, for his help and support during the completion of this research.

Thank you to my friends, inside and outside of the Centre for Visual Arts, for their understanding and encouragement, for sharing inspiration with me.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this Master's dissertation was to investigate the use of pattern and fabric in the artworks of contemporary artists Yinka Shonibare, Bronwen Findlay and the researcher, Joanna Smart. Through this enquiry the aim was to position her practice and approach with respect to pattern in the contemporary Fine Art context. This research intended to explore how pattern and textile is used to challenge the art and craft hierarchy within the art of a few contemporary artists. Further this research acknowledges a subjective element in these artists choice of pattern and fabric.

The methodology used in this research is Practice-Based, which will reflect on how the researcher makes work through the painting process and the documentation of that process. The theoretical framework that underpinned the thesis is the art/craft debate. The researcher's studio practice aimed to disrupt hierarchies of art and craft, and this dissertation explored how notions of art and craft have been interrogated in her painting.

This dissertation discussed how the approaches of other artists has shifted the researcher's work with regard to pattern and cloth. The researcher aimed to experiment with the different ways in which textiles and pattern can be used in the researcher's paintings. Through a reflection of her painting practice and an examination of how other artists use pattern and cloth, the complexity of possible meaning inherent in pattern and fabric was explored. For example, the conceptual meaning of pattern and fabric in the researcher's painting practice was encouraged by the research into other contemporary artists' works. The researcher discovered a deeper appreciation for the way cloth and pattern challenges hierarchies within art and craft. Furthermore, the way in which pattern and cloth are often used as signifiers of culture and identity was explored. This dissertation explores how pattern and cloth reflects the researcher's experiences. Importantly, the review of other artists' work shifted how she uses fabric and pattern as a representation of culture and identity in her paintings. Additionally, her practice shifted visually with regards to diverse textures, colours and tones.

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## 1.0 Chapter One: Background and Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This dissertation is the written component of the Practice-Based Master's of Fine Art – Research (MAFA–R), which examines the specific ways that fabric and pattern are exploited in the artistic practice of British-Nigerian artist, Yinka Shonibare (b. 1962), South African artist Bronwen Findlay, (b. 1953) and my own practice (b. 1990).

In my previous study, my Honours research paper (2013) examined the imagery derived from pattern and fabric in the artworks of Shonibare and Findlay. In this MAFA–R research, the aim is to increase the understanding of how pattern and textiles inform my work. In doing so, I hope to position my practice with pattern in the contemporary Fine Art context.

Although pattern and fabric are generally considered to be trivial (Markowitz 1994), I view it as more complex than mere decoration, as I show in this research. My painting and research attempts to understand the significance of textiles, revealing the reasons why Shonibare and Findlay adopt cloth as a medium.

My environment has always been the inspiration for my paintings. Some of the textiles that fill my family home and inform my artistic practice, map where I have been, because they were collected there in the course of journeys to Namibia. Other textiles that inform my painting practice were collected by my family through travels to places such as India, Kuwait and England. I have bought cloths in Durban that are used in my paintings to examine the intersection of and trade between cultures in this city. Additionally, I consider that the industrial manufacture and importation of textiles from different countries, has exposed me to fabric that refers to far-flung places.

In addition to fabric and pattern, I use the patterns found in the buildings in my home town, Durban in my painting practice. The repeated patterns of shapes and colours that are noted in the Durban buildings are an artistic inspiration in my paintings. Furthermore, I respond visually to the differences in the motifs and tones that are observed in buildings. A discussion regarding the use of building patterns and cloth is explained in more detail in Chapter Four.

Textiles are central to Findlay's, Shonibare's and my practice, but we use cloth and pattern differently from one another. To illustrate, this dissertation examines two of Shonibare's paintings that form a small part of his artistic oeuvre, and an installation that incorporates batik wax fabric in his interrogation of colonial history (Enwezor 2003). Moreover, it investigates Findlay's adaptation of Basotho blanket motifs in her paintings, which disrupts hierarchical canons of art and craft (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). Furthermore, the study is conducted from the point of view of a white South African woman who incorporates textile craft and domestic items in her artwork to represent personal clothing as a way to reflect her identity and tastes.

## 1.2 Objectives

It is important for the development of my artistic practice that I examine the ways and why in which I assimilate pattern and cloth in my work. By comparing my practice to other artists', I hope to account for the use and intentions behind pattern and cloth in my work.

The main objectives of this paper are:

- To identify the intentions of three artists' approach to fabric and pattern in their artworks.
- To explore the conceptual value of fabric and pattern.
- To interrogate my subjective response to pattern and textiles.

To do this I will need to critically evaluate Shonibare's and Findlay's artworks and focus on how my practice changes through interrogating their conceptual and aesthetic use of pattern and fabric. This will be achieved by the exploring the themes that underpin Shonibare's, Findlay's and my use of pattern and cloth in our works as follows:

- To compare three artists' use of pattern and textiles.
- To explore why the use of pattern and cloth in three artists' works challenges hierarchies within themes such as the art and craft debate, gender roles, class and racial divides.

- To show how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks to illustrate the effect of colonialism on Africa and Europe.
- To explore how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to investigate his position in post-colonial British Fine Art society.
- To depict how and why Findlay's exploration of Tsonga-Shangaan cloth in her Master's dissertation led to the adaptation of Basotho blankets in her works.
- To investigate how and why Basotho blankets function as a reminder of the colonial influence in South Africa.
- To illustrate how and why Findlay depicts her South African identity and surroundings with Basotho blankets.
- To analyse why the use of textiles acts as a descriptor of my surroundings in my paintings.
- To explore how and why my appreciation (subjective and conceptual) of pattern and cloth has changed or developed through this research.
- To examine how and why this research shifts how I view and how and why I make my work.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The research questions below form the guideline of this research. Furthermore, the research questions that I use have allowed me to achieve the objectives that I set out to explore. The over-arching question of this research is:

- How does my approach to my painting practice help me understand my appreciation of the complexities of pattern and fabric?

To interrogate the theme of pattern and fabric in my work a set of more specific research questions will be used to address the main research question.

In this research, I endeavour to investigate the following questions:

- What are the intentions of the artists when they use pattern and fabric?
  1. Why and how does Shonibare use batik wax fabric and Findlay use Basotho blankets in their artworks? The artworks that I use in this investigation are:
    - i. Shonibare's *Double Dutch* (1994), acrylic on Dutch wax printed cotton canvases, 332×588cm overall, each panel measures 32×32×4.5cm.
    - ii. Shonibare's *100 Years* (2008), emulsion and acrylic on Dutch wax printed cotton, and painted wall, 248.9×850.9cm overall, each panel measures 29.8×29.8×5.7cm.
    - iii. Shonibare's *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997), reproduction furniture, fire screen, carpet, props, stanchions, Dutch wax printed cotton, measurements vary.
    - iv. Findlay's *Basotho Blanket* (2004), oil on canvas, 164×158cm.
    - v. Findlay's *Basotho Blanket II* (2006), oil and mixed media on canvas, 164×158cm.
    - vi. Findlay's *Blanket Part 1* (2005), intaglio print with hand-painting, 75,5×110cm.
  2. How does this compare to how and why I use domestic textiles in *Indian Cushion* (2016), oil on canvas, 100×100cm; *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016), oil on canvas, 42×59cm; *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016), mixed media oil on canvas, 75×50cm?
- How does each artist use pattern and fabric to explore its meaning?
  1. What does pattern and fabric reveal in each artists work in relation to identity and culture?
  2. How and why do Shonibare and Findlay use fabric and pattern to explore hierarchies of the art and craft debate, which also pertains to gender roles, racial and class divides?

- How does positioning myself in relation to these examples inform my practice and assist me in understanding my work?
1. How and why do I re-appropriate building motifs and patterned textiles in my work so as to explore my subjective preference for pattern, texture and colour?
  2. What are the new discoveries that I have made about my work through the investigation of these artists?
  3. What changes are there in my work as a consequence of this research in my art?
  4. How and why has my appreciation of pattern and fabric developed?
  5. Where is the art/craft debate now and how does my work contribute to that debate?

## **1.4 Methodology**

A methodology consists of the theoretical analysis of the methods used to conduct research (Crotty 1998). According to Crotty, the methodology is a ‘plan of action’ (1998). The methodology is central to research and practical process, because the use of particular methods will achieve certain results (Crotty 1998). This section will explore the Practice-Based methodologies that this research entails, as well as how a qualitative approach to the research will take place.

### **1.4.1 Practice-Based Research**

This dissertation consists of Practice-Based Research, wherein the practice has formed a part of the basis of the knowledge. Practice-Based Research is a new research model explored partly through the process of practice, and partly through the recording of and reflection on that practice (Candy 2006). Practice-Based Research has shifted the emphasis from research about the Visual Arts and artists, predominantly carried out by art historians and critics, to the artists researching through practice and reflecting on that practice (Gray & Malins 2004). The written component and painting practice will run in parallel with each other and will be submitted together (Candy 2006). Theory and practice form part of Practice-Based Research but it is important to be clear about how theory and practice influence the other (Candy &



Edmonds 2011). This will be achieved by documenting my painting practice in a journal and comparing how my work has shifted since the research began. My painting practice and theoretical component are linked through a similar theme of pattern and textiles, but they can be viewed as separate works.

Furthermore, to present Practice-Based Research that is relevant and reflective, the conceptual and practical components are required to be positioned within a theoretical framework (Sullivan 2010, Gray & Malins 2004) To do this, I situated the conceptual and practical components in the theoretical framework that guides the theory and practice as discussed in section 1.5 (Sullivan 2010).

#### **1.4.2 Qualitative research**

The practical and theoretical components involve qualitative research. According to Durrheim, Painter and Terre Blanche, qualitative research entails the collection of material in various ways and from multiple sources (2006:287); selecting which information to use; and how much data is required ‘until theoretical saturation’ (2006:288) which was utilised to form the investigation (2006:290). For instance, selected works by Shonibare and Findlay were examined through a process of discursive analysis through looking at texts and images from as many different sources as possible.

In order to critically evaluate key questions of the research (Sullivan 2010:55), the data was collected from visual and textual materials that document the art practices of Findlay and Shonibare. The information that is used in this dissertation consists of texts collected from articles, books and reviews of exhibitions that link to the research on Findlay and Shonibare to my use of textiles and pattern. The analysis of visual material, such as works of art by Findlay, Shonibare and I, and the interrogation of textiles and pattern that inspired these artworks informs the Practice-Based Research component of the investigation.

The history, social meaning and motifs of certain cloths also form a part of the data, because the backgrounds to the textiles are relevant to the understanding and interpretation of the artworks.

A portion of the research methodology includes painting. This includes a process of doing, intense looking, documenting and reflecting on my practice. The reflection takes place through a review of the painting process in a journal and through discourse with peers and supervisors (Smart 2016, May 18). The process of practice and reflection runs alongside and feeds into each other. The practical research features paintings that depict my interest in pattern and fabric in the one project, and another project where I look at pattern and variation within the buildings of Durban. A painting portfolio depicts the interest in two subjects: painting and writing to inform my practice.

The samples of the data are collected from a comparative analysis of works by Findlay, Shonibare and myself, wherein pattern plays a pivotal role. The artists that are investigated in this research was deliberate. Shonibare and Findlay were chosen because they have important similarities and differences to the researcher's painting practice. This was needed in order to properly explore the research questions that were set out in section 1.3. For instance, one similarity amongst the three artists would be their use of pattern and fabric in their works'. Data collected from journals, articles and books regarding the history and production of textiles and that appear in the works of Findlay, Shonibare and myself are critical to this interrogation. The sampling of the information is achieved by a careful selection of the artists, textiles and works that are examined in this research. I have specifically chosen artists that use cloth in their artistic practice, like myself. Moreover, specific artworks have been chosen because they are the most relevant to the study.

'Validity' applies to the correctness or precision of the data and logic within an investigation. Firstly, internal validity is concerned with whether the researcher is interrogating what he or she set out to research (Lewis & Ritchie 2013). Secondly, external validity applies to whether the research questions are relevant to wider areas within the study and other research and contexts (Lewis & Ritchie 2013).

The comparative analysis of Shonibare and Findlay's incorporation of textiles and pattern allows me to validate my work and to investigate pattern and textiles as subject matter. The sustained reflection and dialogue with peers about my work and the written study has helped to test the validity of my claims about my work. For example, every week a meeting with supervisors and fellow Master's Students provides a comparative discourse (Hall & Spencer pers. comms. 2016, September 26). The research will examine and compare works, materials

and technique apparent in Findlay's, Shonibare's and my artwork. This will assist in addressing the research questions that are set out in section 1.3.

This research refers to reliable resources on the works of Shonibare and Findlay, such as scholarly writing by John Picton, Olu Oguibe, Juliette Leeb-du Toit and Isabelle Hofmeyr. It is further made externally valid by comparing recent texts such as Julia Skelly's 2017 book *Radical Decadence: Excess in Contemporary Textiles and Craft* to older texts such as *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981) by Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock (a further description of these texts is available in the Literature Review on page 12 of this study). Other themes such as identity, culture and race are focused on to provide a broader scope of analysis in conjunction with focuses on the art and craft debate.

## **1.5 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework consists of concepts and existing knowledge that form the basis of the research (Crotty 1998). The theoretical framework considers the theories that support the written and painting practice (Sullivan 2010:99). The theoretical framework will underpin the issues that surround the position that this research is located. In this section, the position of textiles in contemporary art and the art and craft debate will be explored. In this research, the framework of notions of modernity includes topics of culture, class, identity, 'High' and 'Low' Art, African/Western, notions of primitive and civilised cultures and authenticity. By highlighting the framework that this research is situated in, I can clearly respond to the research questions and objectives that I set out to explore. In this research I deal with cloth and pattern, so it is essential to addressing the research questions and objectives that I understand how they are thought of in the Fine Art context, as I discuss below.

### **Textiles**

Textiles have been seen as craft rather than art. This dissertation endeavours to examine the significant contribution made by textile artists to 'High' Art through the ways in which the cloth is appropriated and revised by other artists – artists who are not themselves the producers of the original textiles (Picton 2001:67). The recent attention given to textile art

by art historians such as John Picton and Janis Jeffries, and artists Shonibare and Findlay is overturning the art and craft divide (Picton 1992:13, Jeffries 2017).

African textiles, and textiles in general, did not receive the notice that was given to 'primitive' African sculpture during the nineteenth-century (Greenhalgh 1997:28, Auther 2008). This was due to textile art as being categorised as a domestic chore (Markowitz 1994, Skelly 2017:3) and not a profession (Picton & Mack 1979:21). A more recent example is explored by Elissa Auther in *Fiber Art and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft, 1960-80* (2008). She argues that during the period of 1960 to the 1980s, textiles were still considered craft, even though they were exhibited in art galleries (2008). From Auther's discussion it is apparent that only roughly in the last twenty years, have African textiles and textile art received new-found acclaim from art historians (Auther 2008, Picton 1992:13, LaGamma 2009:88). For instance, the analysis of textiles in contemporary Fine Art forms a part of the theoretical framework, for it is only recently that cloth has received critical acclaim regarding its aesthetic value (LaGamma 2009:88). Additionally, Skelly's book *Radical Decadence: Excess in Contemporary Feminist Textiles and Craft* (2017), focuses on a very recent use of domestic textiles and craft in contemporary art to challenge value-based hierarchies that are prevalent in Modern Art (2017:3–4). Alexandra M. Kokoli debates that fabric and craft associated with domesticity have become a subversive tool in Feminist Art. She explains that textiles and craft 'amplifies the ambiguities' of patriarchal culture, as they are found in private and public and formal and informal situations (2015). For example, embroidery and craft practices were often ideal feminine pass-times, which instilled core feminine values through pious verses and inherently calm and confined processes (Parker 1984:11–13, Parker & Pollock 1981:58). Now these practices which were meant to constrict women are now being used by contemporary artists to break down gender, class and art and craft boundaries that once elevated white masculinity (Jeffries 2017, Kokoli 2017, Skelly 2017:54).

### **Art and Craft, 'High' and 'Low' Art**

In this section, ideologies of art, craft, 'High' and 'Low' Art will be discussed as it is the basis for this dissertation. Here, the debate will begin with definitions of art and craft and how it effects this research. An in-depth focus on the history of the ideologies of art and craft will be highlighted next. The differences between art and craft are extracted in the discussion. Then the focus moves on to how the art and craft debate is being challenged in

contemporary artists' practice and how these ideologies have shifted. Next, the debate turns to concepts of 'High' and 'Low' Art with regards to art produced by white men while craft is reserved for women or people of non-white heritage. This is key to the research and painting practice, as I cannot respond to the research questions and objectives regarding how my painting practice contributes to art and craft without acknowledging the history and arguments that exist within this debate. More discussion on where the art and craft debate is now can be found on page 20 to 22 in the Literature Review. Additionally, focusing on these hierarchies will help me identify why Shonibare and Findlay use pattern and fabric to explore art, craft, gender, race and class divides, which is a research question that this dissertation aims to address. Furthermore, I need to reflect on how other artists approach these issues to properly interrogate how my painting practice similarly deals with these themes. This will help position the approach to the research and focus on when this research is taking place. For example, the art and craft debate has slowly been broken down so that new approaches to artistic practice may be taken up, such as craft and textile art, by people who were once excluded from art discourse, such as people of colour and women.

Art refers to 'artefacts, processes, skill and effects' used to produce visual representations (Harris 2007:20–21). Craft can be defined as a practice that uses certain 'material practices and occupations distinct from art'. Craft is understood as labour, and 'entails a process of making'. Craft refers to 'functional or decorative objects' (Harris 2006:71–72).

The art and craft debate is central to the research. Further, notions of 'High' and 'Low' Art are a pivotal theme in Shonibare's, Findlay's and my artworks. For example, craft items such as fabric and pattern feature in these artists' works and link the three artists through the mediums which they choose to use. My study and formative training has taken place when the boundaries between Fine Art and craft are blurring (Bonnet 1992, Skelly 2017:1). For example, African art, such as sculpture and masquerade has only recently been aesthetically recognised as art (Picton 1992:13).

According to Heslop, as early as the twelfth-century, painting and sculpture that depicted the human figure was given greater value than enamelling and metalwork (1997:54). Debates about the division of art and craft continued during the Renaissance, when issues of art as superseding craft were debated (Lucie-Smith 1981:11). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Royal Academy provided artists with 'professional' status that

elevated them from the category of ‘tradesmen’ (Lucie-Smith 1981:165). In the eighteenth-century craftspeople were not given a chance to study their profession in an academy, which prevented craft practice from becoming intellectual (Skelly 2017:2). Certain practices divided what was categorised as art or craft. Painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry were regarded as Fine Art within the academies of the eighteenth-century (Greenhalgh 1997:27). Apart from these Fine Art processes, the practices that remained were classified as ‘decorative, useful or industrial arts’ (Greenhalgh 1997:28).

Art is seen as an object to be contemplated, while craft is functional and associated with the everyday (Markowitz 1994). The creativity of art was distinguished from the worthiness of craft that implied that the artist possessed a vision and imagination (Greenhalgh 1997:41). The craftsmen had to produce items they were commissioned to do so in order to serve a purpose, rather than expressing their individuality (1997:41). This implies that art is viewed as intellectual and craft as commonplace. This view incorrectly denigrates craft as beneath art (Coetsee 2002:8). The recent critical thinking about craft as a ‘process of doing things’ and not just a ‘classification’ has helped break down the ideology that craft is merely a functional object (Adamson 2007:3). This has provided craft the opportunity to be thought of in a conceptual way and thus elevate craft from the lowest rung on the art ladder (Buszek 2011).

The person who makes an object applies value to a work as art or craft. If the artist is a woman or a person of ‘other’, non-European origin their works’ are not seen as art, but rather devalued as craft (Markowitz 1994, Oguibe 2002:43). The producer of art was seen to be someone who had formal artistic training from an academic institution of art (Oguibe 2002:37). In contrast, a craft person had learnt the practice as a ‘hobby’ or for domestic chores (Greenhalgh 1997:37).

The environment in which art is produced is limited. Bonnet explains that art has been elevated and detached from everyday life, as it is placed or produced in institutions that are designated as ‘artistic environments’ like the art gallery or art academies (1992). Craft, on the other hand, is seen to be produced in domestic environments and on the periphery (Markowitz 1994).

Previously in art history, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth century (Parker & Pollock 1981:87), mental struggle was regarded as inherent in art produced by men ('High' Art), while craft (or women's work) was considered repetitive, laborious and did not require thought or intellect (Parker & Pollock 1981:54). Feminine characteristics were described as 'patient, submissive, obedience and modesty' that would be noticed in quiet, domestic work such as embroidery (Parker & Pollock 1981:65–66). For example, women often embroidered slogans onto cloth that adorned houses, which enforced moral values of femininity (Parker & Pollock 1981:66).

In a similar mindset to the superiority of art over craft, Modernist Art, such as Abstract Expressionism, held fast to ideologies of the 'male genius' (Parker & Pollock 1981:13). For example, the artist Jackson Pollock was described as an 'action painter' which entailed using 'physical strength and mental struggle' to create artistic masterpieces (Milissane 2015). Physical strength, creation and doing were described as 'male attributes' that were present in art produced by males (Parker & Pollock 1981:83). In contrast, women were considered too weak to produce large, gestural or vigorous works of art and were limited to small objects that adorned the home (Parker & Pollock 1981:8). In the twenty-first century, Buszek debates that the rules regarding what art is, what art is made of and who makes it are now shifting with the academic training of male and female students in craft practices that are conceptual (2011).

Howard Risatti takes on Greenberg's view regarding the superiority of art over craft (Simpson 2011). Risatti highlights that craftsmanship produces 'one-of-a-kind' pieces, while design produces 'multiples' linked to mass-production (2007). Although Risatti acknowledges the value of craft, he describes definite categorical differences between craft and design, which is precisely how the issue of the art and craft hierarchy came to exist. Risatti claims that craft has not undergone the 'intellectualisation' that art has and as such is not a 'conceptually centred activity' (2007). Furthermore, he argues that craft can be categorised as art once the ties with 'function are severed' (2007). This is challenged by Buszek's debate that craft students were producing conceptual works that focused less on the 'craft object as a tool' itself and more on the idea (2011). Buszek argues against Risatti's idea by explaining that the craft students use of 'process-oriented' practice that centres around labour of producing a work of art or craft rather than focusing on art or craft as an object (2011).

The art and craft debate has been an ongoing theme within art discourses and recently this divide has been challenged. The breaking down of the art and craft divide as well as the exclusionary aspects of art and the art academy have been highlighted in feminist discourse and the Art and Crafts Movement. Only recently have these conventions slowly been reviewed and broken down. In the late nineteenth-century William Morris and John Ruskin returned to pre-industrial ways of creating individual products rather than mass-produced goods (Greenhalgh 1997:25). Through this Morris aimed to demonstrate that craft should be considered an art (Cooper 1994:18).

During the early twentieth-century, the Cubists and Futurists, such as Pablo Picasso incorporated everyday items such as newspaper cuttings in their art to disrupt the traditional view of the artwork as an ideal representation of reality (Bonnet 1992). The incorporation of commonplace objects in Cubist and Futurist Art challenged the notion that art was an autonomous institution separate from the ordinary (Bonnet 1992). In 1916, the Dadaists began to make artworks as ‘anti-art’ which featured ‘ready-made’ objects that mocked traditional art (Bonnet 1992).

Feminist artists and other artists are using textile-based mediums which had previously been a sign of craft, domesticity and femininity and a sign of repression as a ‘weapon of resistance’ against the disregard of craft practices and art produced by people on the margins in Fine Art contexts (Skelly 2017:3). Similarly, recent academic training and intellectual study of craft (Buszek 2011, Skelly 2017:2), has begun to challenge previous ideologies that craft is ‘hobby-work’ that lacks ingenuity and requires no conceptual thought (Parker & Pollock 1981:54). For example, at the Goldsmiths University of London, a Bachelor of Honours in Fine Art includes ‘craft’ modules, such as constructed, and printed textiles, fabric, and stitch alongside painting, printmaking and sculpture (Goldsmiths, University of London 2017).

Within the art category there is a separate classification of what constitutes ‘High’ and ‘Low’ Art. ‘High’ Art refers to the ‘most significant’ artistic creations as defined by art critics and art historians (Harris 2006:140), that was produced in the academies, and exhibited in art galleries (Bonnet 1992). Certain practices are considered ‘High’ Art by Western art historians, such as sculpture and painting (Harris 2006:140). According to Harris, art historians also have objects of art that are considered ‘High’ Art because they are considered



to have ‘compositional and intellectual’ significance (2006:140). For example, Harris argues that Hagesandros’, Athenodoros’ and Polydoros’ of Rhodes *Laocoon and His Sons* (c. 25 BCE) and Pablo Picasso’s *Violin and Grapes* (1912) are ‘High’ Art creations (2006:140).

In contrast, popular culture is considered ‘Low’ Art because it is ‘art for the masses’ while ‘High’ Art is reserved for the few (Greenberg 1939). while ‘Low’ Art is associated with mass-production (Greenberg 1939). For example, kitsch refers to ‘art, objects, or designs’ that are garishly patterned, ‘bright’ or too ‘sentimental’ (Soanes 2002:497). Kitsch would define items of art and literature that are ‘mass-produced’, such as ‘magazines and comics’. According to Greenberg, kitsch developed out of the ‘industrial revolution’ that occurred in ‘Western Europe and America’ (1939) in the eighteenth-century (De Vries 1994), which created ‘universal literacy’ (Greenberg 1939). Art that was deemed ‘kitsch’ would be considered ‘Low’ Art.

I explored in the above paragraphs that art practiced by certain groups of people was held in higher regard than others. This is shown in the separation between African and Western Art. Value has previously been given to modernist European art (Oguibe 1999 a:24) as ‘High’ Art, while non-European art and craft were disregarded as being ‘Low’ Art. Western is defined as a term used in colonial theories to separate cultures as either West or non-West (Cousin 2011). For example, European and modern (post-colonial) American cultures would be considered Western (Cousin 2011). In contrast, the non-Western cultures would be considered cultures that are outside of this category, for example, ‘African, Native American, Aboriginal cultures’ (Cousin 2011). Eastern ‘Oriental’ cultures such as Indian, Chinese and Arab cultures are similarly considered non-Western (Cousin 2011). The term Western can also categorise ways of thinking and doing, as Western is ‘a structure of thought and knowledge’ (Cousin 2011). This term is ambiguous as often the cultures, knowledge and ways of thinking are products of trade between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ cultures (Cousin 2011).

Recent debates question the importance applied to modern European white male art, while African, female, or any other artistic productions are marginalised as craft (Oguibe 1999 a:24, Markowitz 1994). Minissale argues that heterosexual, white masculinity has been projected as the canon within culture, and as such art produced by non- white, heterosexual males is excluded (2015). This is exemplified by Pollock’s large, Abstract Expressionist

artworks that possess the qualities of masculinity (Minissale 2015) such as ‘thrust, force and mastery’ (Parker & Pollock 1981:83). Shonibare deals with the pressure of having to make work that deals with his African identity (Oguibe 2004:33). On the other hand, Findlay and I debate our position in the contemporary art world as female artists, who would have previously been categorised as producers of craft (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). The ‘High’ and ‘Low’ Art divide is being challenged along with the art and craft debate that I discussed above. The Dada movement challenged the concept of ‘High’ and ‘Low’ Art by presenting everyday objects in an art gallery to question what art is (Bonnet 1992).

Shonibare investigates the art and craft debate in his paintings through using craft items in *Double Dutch* (1994). In Findlay’s paintings she challenges the value-based hierarchy of art and craft by using bright colours in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006). I use fabric and pattern in my paintings to try to question the exclusion of some practices from the field of Fine Art. The separation between Western and African art is centred around the themes of primitivism as opposed to civilisation, as discussed below.

### **Primitivism/Civilisation**

I need to understand themes such as primitive and civilised before I can address research questions and objectives regarding why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1990) to interrogate issues of value in cultures. Through focusing on this, I can identify what pattern and fabric reveals in Shonibare’s work with regards to African and European identity and culture. Moreover, this will provide a comparison to how I use fabric and pattern in my painting practice which is an objective of this research. Within post-colonial discourse themes that surround art include issues of the ‘Other’. The ‘Other’ is used to define the ‘self’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). In post-colonial theory, the ‘other’ can refer to the colonised as the marginalised group (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). The ‘Other’ can include opposing themes which can describe civilisation and primitivism, an important aspect in art historical discourse. For example, Harris explains that civilisation refers to the cultures that are associated with ‘developed’ nations. For instance, cultures would be considered civilised if they had ideals such as ‘laws’ and ‘social order’. Cultures that have infrastructure such as ‘cities, transport and communications systems’ were considered civilised. Moreover, nations that had ‘developed institutions, technology and skills’ were considered civilised (2006:51–52). On the other hand, post-colonial discourse applies importance to white European or American art as ‘civilised’ and black or African art as

‘primitive’ (Oguibe 2002:43). This was based on the ideas that ‘primitive’ art did not realistically represent space (Harris 2006:251–252). In contrast, art that was produced in the West after and during the Renaissance, was considered ‘High’ Art because it imitated real life.

‘Primitivism’ is a term used in art history and literary study to identify a school of art and writing that emphasises ‘simplicity of form’ or theme indicative of the primal era of human cultural advances (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). This term depicts a ‘linear’ record of history that suggests the process of development from ‘simple’ art to ‘complex’ art (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). The problem with the term ‘primitive’ is that it categorises the cultures and traditions of artists who are ‘untrained’, because their traditions do not mimic the artistic conventions of the West, leading to the comparisons of the ‘value’ of different cultures (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

‘Primitive’ continues to be a term used today, although the relatively recent interest in the ‘untrained’ nature and non-realistic depictions in African art has shifted the way ‘primitive’ art is seen. In the twentieth-century Pablo Picasso’s artwork *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1907) and Henri Matisse’s *The Dance* (1907) reference African art that has highlighted the stylistic and expressive significance of ‘primitive’ art (Harris 2006:252–253). This created interest in African art (Kasfir 1992:47). For instance, some have labelled ‘untutored’ African art as more ‘authentic’ than the learned principles within Fine Art (Oguibe 2002:44), which illustrates the newfound merit applied to ‘primitive’ art.

The divide between African, Western, primitive and civilised cultures brings us to the theme of originality, which has prevailed since the colonialism of Africa.

### **Originality**

In order to respond to research questions and objectives, I need to reflect on issues of originality that is given to Fine Art but has been denied textiles and art on the periphery. The problematic discourse of authenticity and originality, specifically with regards to African art and culture, began during the colonial rule and exploration of Africa. For example, Kasfir (1999:88) and Shiner (1994) explain that African art created before colonisation was considered ‘authentic’, while African art that was created after colonisation was considered ‘false’. This was because of the subsequent influence that European cultures had on African

societies through trade and appropriation (Kasfir 1999:90). This is a problematic view because it wrongly implies that African cultures remained unchanged for a long period of time (Kasfir 1999:91,93). It was this mentality that created false notions that Africa was ‘traditional’ and part of the past, while in comparison modern civilisation was associated with the West (Kapur 2002:19).

Within Fine Art the notion of the ‘original’ implies that an object has importance simply because of who made it (Meuli 1997:205). The Fine Art world has not applied importance to the African art maker, because the creator often remains anonymous (Kasfir 1999:94, Meuli 1997:205). This leads to the marginalisation of art from groups of people who are not part of the Fine Art canon, as ‘primitive’ (Kasfir 1999:94), because a name, date or origin of the creator is not provided (Markowitz 1992). In actuality, as Kasfir argues, the details of the maker and source were considered unimportant to art critics and collectors of African art (1999:94).

Other post-colonial issues that may be pertinent to this research are issues of globalisation, culture, class, identity and hybridity that constitute modernity. Modernity refers to the developments of society during the nineteenth-century, which Sardar argues was fallaciously reserved for defining Western history (2002:12). During the period of modernity, previous hierarchies are progressively being broken down with the example of critical debates on the dubious significance of Western cultures over other customs (Kapur 2002:19). As a result of colonialism and globalism, which are aspects of modernity, cultures have evolved and appropriated many aspects from different groups (Papastergiadis 2002:166). Globalism is a term used to ‘theorise’ and ‘historically demonstrate’ the links that the world and people share (Harris 2006:133) and explains how people and communities are influenced by ‘global economic and cultural forces’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007). Globalism and colonialism has resulted in cultures becoming ‘hybridised’ (Escobar 2002:148). For this phenomenon, the term ‘hybridity’ has been coined (Escobar 2002:148). This term refers to the ‘transcultural forms’ created by colonisation (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

## **Culture**

Other terms that are important to this research includes culture, class and identity. In order to approach the research questions and objectives, it is imperative that I understand issues

and terms within culture, class and identity, as these themes are, in most cases, an aspect of these artists' practice. Chris Jenks interprets that culture was considered an ideology that separates humanity from nature and animals (2005:8). Jenks explains that culture is the 'collective intellectual development' of a society (2005:11) and refers to the 'beliefs, interests and ideologies' of a society (2005:28). For instance, culture includes the arts, morals, law and customs that are practised by a group of people (Jenks 2005:32–33). Furthermore, culture is a term that is unfoundedly associated with civilisation that was thought to only apply to Western societies (Jenks 2005:8). In the twentieth-century, the notion that culture is reserved for Western societies is being contested by many post-modern theorists such as Oguibe (1999:17–29) and Enwezor (1999:245–275). I disagree that the notion of being 'cultured' was reserved for Western societies, as Jenks corroborates (2005:8). For instance, Hall explains that people can be dismissed merely for not following a set way of life or thinking in a particular culture (2002:73).

Shonibare reflects on the different cultures that batik wax fabric refers to through the European heritage of this 'African' fabric. Findlay's artworks highlight the diverse cultures in South Africa through the use of Basotho blanket imagery and springbok imagery. I use fabric from different cultures that I note in Durban.

## **Class**

Within a culture there are many categories that define smaller groups of people within a society (Jenks 2005:94). These 'subcultures' are used to divide people into hierarchical structures (Jenks 2005:94,143). One category is class, which refers to a person's position in society according to economic and social status (Crompton 1993:5). According to Rosemary Crompton, these hierarchical 'structures' are in place to validate inequalities in societies and enforce canonical ways of thinking (1993:1). Class is an example of the dangerous ways that people are grouped according to value-based systems in cultures.

The class hierarchy supports the separation in other structures, such as art and craft. For example, art was seen to be created by people of higher class, while craft was produced by low class people (Parker & Pollock 1981:51). Class is a theme which Shonibare and Findlay examine in their art in different ways through the use of cloth and pattern from diverse classes. For example, Shonibare uses batik wax fabric which is regarded as a mass-produced

textile in his artworks. Findlay uses fabric and pattern from various economic backgrounds such as linoleum flooring that was popular in low-income houses in South Africa (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag.). In my painting practice I do not highlight class structures in my works.

## **Identity**

Ticio Escobar explains that identity develops ‘in relation to other cultural forces’ it has encountered (2002:148). More importantly though, identity is formed through ‘variable positions’ rather than a fixed ‘opposition’ (Escobar 2002:148). This creates ‘ambiguous boundaries’ (Escobar 2002:148) in the globalised world. Escobar further argues that identity is defined by a comparison between the ‘self’ and ‘other’ (2002:147). Within post-colonial discourse, difference between the ‘self’ and ‘other’ has become a central debate. For example, African artists have broken away from the Euro-centric notions of canonical culture that aim to place them in identifiable groups (Mercer 2002:118) (refer to page 18).

Shonibare investigates his life between Nigeria and England with the use of batik wax fabric. Findlay records her experiences throughout her life in her paintings, but she also examines her South African heritage through highlighting South African springbok emblems and Basotho blanket imagery in her paintings. In my artworks I paint things that I feel connect me to my surroundings of Durban, such as Durban buildings. Furthermore, I paint Indian inspired fabric, South African *isishweshwe* and European embroidered cloth that is in my view reminiscent of the cultures of Durban that I feel connected with.

All of these themes underpin post-colonial and art and craft debates. I will discuss how each theme is relevant or not, with regards to Shonibare’s, Findlay’s and my works, which are discussed in the following sections.

## **1.6 Literature review**

In this section, the literature review evaluates important texts that underpin the research I undertook.

In conducting this research, I have relied on several sources to obtain information about how and why Findlay, Shonibare and I use and appropriate textiles in different ways. I found that

as cloth and pattern were the main aspects of this study, that literature about the art and craft debate and hierarchies within society affecting these artists was important to this research.

The painting practice and conceptual framework has been documented in a personal journal, which will be the primary resource regarding my work. I also rely on examining and contemplating my painting process and the results that emerge from my practice. This is an important aspect to interrogate how and why I use textiles because of their conceptual complexities, while at the same time I respond intuitively to their material properties. Furthermore, recording my practice will provide insight into the changes that were a result of this study. Additionally, it will highlight how and why my appreciation of fabric and pattern has developed through this investigation, which is a research question that I set out to respond to.

The scholarly writing that was most useful with regards to the way in which textiles and craft in general are used in contemporary artists' practice was the book *Radical Decadence: Excess in Contemporary Feminist Textiles and Craft* (2017) by Julia Skelly. Skelly's articles provide a discussion on how textiles are used by feminist artists to disrupt the art/craft hierarchy. She focuses on how artists use cloth to question the gendered roles of craft and art, while providing an alternative discourse on the preconceived frivolity of cloth and craft as 'excessive embellishment' (Skelly 2017:1). This book is central to the theoretical framework of this research as it argues against the hierarchy of art and craft. On the other hand, Skelly's book highlights the complexity of craft and fabric as a tool to question feminine identities, roles and expectations (Skelly 2017:3–4). This is a particularly important aspect of this research, as I explore how the art and craft debate influences my painting practice and other artists' works. Furthermore, it debates why artists use cloth and craft in their artworks, which is a question that this research aims to address. Additionally, in her book, Skelly explores the concept of pleasure in feminist art, craft, decoration and textiles, both material and physical, whereas Fine Art focuses purely on visual and excludes all other sense (Skelly 2017:58). This concept is important to this research as I respond subjectively to the materiality, colour and patterns of fabric derived from looking at and touching textiles (Skelly 2017:58). Skelly's discussion assists me in interrogating why I use fabric and pattern in my artworks for reasons other than the theoretical. It helps me understand my subjective response to fabric. Skelly's debate helps provide examples of how my painting practice contributes to the art and craft debate, while also acknowledging that

it is not purely about that argument, as each artist in Skelly's book has other reasons behind their work. For example, Tracey Emin's work could be defined as feminist art because she uses textiles, which are generally seen as 'women's work'. Rather, Emin insists that she does not intend her work to be feminist even though her work deals with issues that she encounters as a woman, yet it is more than this conceptual aspect – it is more personal (Skelly 2017:75). Moreover, Skelly's book assists me in responding to research questions, which I set out in section 1.3. For instance, this book argues how artists use fabric, pattern and decoration in their work to explore the inherent conceptual and idiosyncratic complexities of this medium that has similarities to my approach to my painting practice.

In a similar genre is Rozsika Parker's *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine* (1984), which debates the issues of femininity and embroidery as a feminine craft. Craft as a feminine task is rooted in the art and craft debate, which is a theme that my art practice aims to question. This debate is an important theme that will help in responding to research questions about why the artists chosen to use craft and textiles in their work. Female artists are the focus of this book and it highlights how works done by the female artist is often denigrated in the mostly male art canon. Although this book is not recent, other authors have labelled this book as 'ground-breaking' (Skelly 2017:38). Parker's book will help me to position my painting practice within the art and craft debate, as the book explores the history of women's art and cloth and where they fit in the art canon. Further, this shows where the art and craft debate is now because Parker highlights the history of women's art and craft, which is a research question in this research.

Parker and Griselda Pollock's book *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981), charts the history of women and art. This book is important to understanding the past views of women and the craft and art hierarchy, which is the groundwork of this dissertation. Parker and Pollock highlight the male dominated world of Fine Art and how women have tried to enter into the art canon. This book underlines the thinking that surrounded the art and craft debate and the perceived superiority of art produced by the 'genius' white male, while women's art was considered 'decorative' and lacking in 'creative imagination' (Parker & Pollock 1981:13) and 'intellect' (Parker & Pollock 1981:54). This is important to this research, as this notion persists in Modernist Art with the example of Jackson Pollock's Abstract Expressionist work as Fine Art, and feminine textiles, craft or 'kitsch' art as inferior (Parker & Pollock 1981:83). *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* is an essential book



that shines a spotlight on the historical views of women, art and craft that will respond to the research questions regarding the position that textiles and craft is in now. Skelly's, Parker's and Parker's and Pollock's books will be used as a lens to look at the value of women's art, craft and textiles, which is an important theme in this dissertation.

On the other hand, Greenberg in *Avant-Garde and Kitsch* (1939), explores the dubious 'superiority' of Modern Art that is based on hegemonic ideas of 'High' Art produced by white, heterosexual males. Greenberg denigrates art associated with the everyday and mass-produced items such as movies, magazines, and popular culture in general that was borne out of industrialisation in the nineteenth century. Greenberg's argument provides a counterpoint to the more recent writing against the art and craft hierarchy. This literature forms the background to the research, because it provides a view into the previously held beliefs of what art is; who should make it; and what it should be made out of, and as such is central to this dissertation. A similar discussion is held by Risatti on page 12 of the Theoretical Framework. Greenberg's writing will assist me in discovering where my painting practice is positioned in the Fine Art context and how it contributes to the art and craft debate.

The literature that was the most helpful to the research on pattern and its use by Shonibare is Olu Oguibe's book, *The Culture Game* (2004) particularly the chapter *Double Dutch and the Culture Game*, which features an in-depth examination of the work *Double Dutch* (1994) by Shonibare. Oguibe considers the provenance of batik wax fabric and its significance in Shonibare's work, noting that it challenges stereotypes of race (2004:41). Oguibe's chapter is relevant to the research questions and practice, because it links to how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to analyse pretexts of culture in his artworks (2004:40), thus providing me with a background from which I could compare to my art making. Oguibe's discussion addresses the research questions regarding how Shonibare's work with batik wax fabric functions as a political commentary with reference to the colonisation of Africa. Additionally, Oguibe highlights how Shonibare interrogates race and the different viewpoints on African art in contemporary Britain through his work. Furthermore, this book will assist in exploring how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his works, which is a research question of this study.

John Picton's article *Undressing Ethnicity* (2001) considers the way in which Shonibare's manipulation of the bright cloth questions what art is expected to be about and who it is made by. *Undressing Ethnicity* is a key text that discusses concepts in the art and craft debate. For example, Picton explores the modernist view within art that all artwork needs to be original, which Shonibare takes issue with and subverts by using mass-produced machine-made fabric (2001:67). This will respond to key questions regarding the role of textiles in Shonibare's work to question art and craft hierarchies. Additionally, it will assist in interrogating how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks to explore ideologies in culture, which is a research question that I set out in section 1.3.

Okwui Enwezor's *Yinka Shonibare: Of Hedonism, Masquerade, Carnavalesque and Power: A Conversation with Okwui Enwezor* (2003) comprises a reflection of Shonibare and his works (1996–2001), including *Victorian Philanthropists' Parlour* (1997) and his use of batik wax fabric in his sculptures and installations. This article reviews a work that I investigate in this dissertation, and discusses how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to question themes of modernist art. Enwezor's article discusses how Shonibare explores the implicit meaning of cloth and fabric in contemporary art, which is an important theme that underpins the research questions of this dissertation. In particular, Enwezor explains how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to interrogate signifiers of African culture (Enwezor 2003). This is an example of how Shonibare uses fabric and pattern in his art in a certain way, which is pertinent to the investigation into exploring how I view that the textiles and pattern in my painting practice are more than mere decoration. Furthermore, the idiosyncratic and conceptual ways that Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his works will help me interrogate my appreciation of fabric and pattern in my works, which is an aim of this research. This in turn will help me explore the shifts that occur as a result of investigating these artists.

In this dissertation (particularly Chapter Three), I use material from Isabel Hofmeyr's article *Findlay's Flowers: Surfaces on the Move* (2012), wherein Hofmeyr examines the use of Basotho blanket imagery in Findlay's artworks (2012: n. pag.). Paramount to responding to the research questions, Hofmeyr reveals the British and Sotho cultural exchange in Basotho blanket imagery (2012: n. pag.). The article will demonstrate how Findlay investigates her South African identity by incorporating Basotho blanket motifs in her work (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). This will respond to the research question regarding how and why Findlay uses cloth and pattern as an exploration of identity and culture, which will help to investigate

through comparison how I use fabric and pattern in a similar way. Additionally, Hofmeyr focuses on how Findlay uses cloth and pattern in her artworks for the colour, patterns and textures inherent in this medium. Through the scholarly discourse on the work of a respected artist, such as Findlay, I can discuss my response to these elements in a critical way that are emotional and subjective, which is an objective of this research.

Julia Charlton's article *Every Picture Tells a Story* (2007) provides information on the paintings *Basotho Blanket* (2004) and *Basotho Blanket II* (2006), which I discuss in this dissertation. Charlton explains that Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery to investigate how the textiles may encapsulate personal memories, which are important themes in Findlay's work (Charlton 2007:13). This article is relevant, because it debates the research question about why Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery in her artworks to evoke her personal experiences and identity (Charlton 2007:13). Furthermore, Charlton's article describes the deeper meaning of cloth and pattern that Findlay explores in her work, which will assist with exploring how and why I use fabric and pattern in my artworks in a similar way. This book debates Findlay's affinity for colour, texture, pattern and oil paint in a material way, which will help me explore how my painting practice makes sense of how I approach these elements. Through this, I will respond to the objectives and research questions that I set out in section 1.2 and 1.3.

Juliette Leeb-du Toit's article *Bronwen Findlay Faiza Galdhari Daina Mabunda* (2000) recounts the trade of cultural ideas between Mabunda, Galdhari and Findlay which is an important theme in this dissertation (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). This is applicable to the studies in that it addresses questions regarding cloth and evaluates the way Findlay attempts to scrutinise South African culture using elements from various cultures (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). This supports the argument that pattern and textiles are used in Findlay's artistic practice as more than mere decoration, which is a key theme that was set out in the research questions. Leeb-du Toit debates that Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery as a way to investigate issues within of art and craft and feminism, which addresses key questions in this research. This will assist me in extracting how my painting practice questions the art and craft hierarchy. Additionally, Leeb-du Toit debates Findlay's use of diverse objects in her paintings that reinforce her affinity for decoration. This highlights an important reference point for my work, as I intend to extract my conceptual and subjective appreciation of pattern and how it has shifted through this research. Furthermore, this will assist me in reflecting on

how this research has shifted how I view and how I make my work. For example, I can use Findlay's approach to painting as a guide to how I can explore my practice and how it has developed as a result of this study.

Findlay's Master's thesis *Aspects of Cloth Usage and Adaptation Amongst the Tsonga-Shangana Women of Northern Transvaal* (1995), is beneficial in the analysis of Findlay's works as she examines her preoccupation with Tsonga-Shangaan cloth. Findlay's dissertation refers to the research questions through the ways in which Findlay is drawn to South African dress traditions that illustrate foreign and local objects, techniques and histories (Findlay 1995:2). Tsonga-Shangaan cloth is a textile that Findlay researched in her Master's dissertation that, Hofmeyr explains, encouraged Findlay to consider other South African textiles (2012: n. pag.). This provides an approach to tackling the research questions with regards to how and why Findlay uses pattern and cloth in her work. For example, she investigates the historical significance of Tsonga-Shangaan cloth, which she links to her interest in Basotho blankets.

The National Museum, Bloemfontein and Oliewenhuis Art Museum kindly sent me a PDF of Basotho blankets from the Robertson family collection, which were exhibited in May to June 2014. This PDF file, by Elmar du Plessis, provides useful socio-historical information on the 'Badges of the Brave' Basotho blanket detailing the manufacturing history and the origins of Basotho blankets incorporated into Sotho everyday life by King Moshoeshoe I (du Plessis 2014:1). This information is essential to answering the research questions about how the 'Badges of the Brave' blanket is used to commemorate South African colonial history in Findlay's *Basotho Blanket* (2004), *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Blanket Part I* (2005). This PDF will assist me in exploring how Basotho blankets function as identity and economic markers in Lesotho, which Findlay examines in her artworks (du Plessis 2014:8). Additionally, Myrtle Karstel's *The Basotho Blanket: Borrowed but Traditional* (1995) is valuable as it considers the history of Basotho blankets including the 'Badges of the Brave' blanket. Karstel discusses the 'Badges of the Brave' blanket and its significance to the colonial history of South Africa and its commemoration of the Second World War (1995). Karstel describes the manufacturing process, and the use of the blankets in everyday life and special events by the Basotho people all of which Findlay draws on in her artworks. Both du Plessis and Karstel's arguments will help me to respond to research questions regarding why Findlay uses Basotho blankets in her artworks. Furthermore, Karstel's book will assist

me in exploring the conceptual value of Basotho blankets that is inherent in fabric and pattern, which Findlay draws on in *Basotho Blanket* (2004). The PDF provided by du Plessis and Karstel's book will provide information that responds to the research question about why fabric and pattern might be used in contemporary artists' practice. This is because pattern and cloth have a deep socio-cultural meaning which is noticed in the use of Basotho blankets as cultural and identity markers in Lesotho.

Tunde M. Akinwumi's *The "African Print" Hoax* (2008) focuses on the history of batik wax fabric in India and mass-production in the Netherlands and England; followed by its exportation to Africa, to be sold to the African market (2008). Akinwumi argues that this cloth signifies a false African identity as its origins are not from Africa, but it has been adopted in Africa as a popular dress tradition (2008). Akinwumi's article is significant to the analysis of Shonibare's artworks and the ways in which Shonibare uses batik wax fabric as a metaphor for African identity (Picton 2001:66). *The "African Print" Hoax* provides vital insight into the history of batik wax fabric and its incorporation into contemporary African life that is useful in answering the questions about how Shonibare appropriates batik wax fabric in his artworks. Although Akinwumi does not discuss Shonibare directly, his argument gives insight into why Shonibare would use batik wax fabric in his work as more than mere decoration, which is one of the research questions and objectives set out in sections 1.2 and 1.3. Furthermore, this article addresses the research question regarding how Shonibare's work with batik wax fabric explores themes of African identity and colonialism as Akinwumi explores the complex history behind batik wax fabric.

John Picton and John Mack's *African Textiles: Looms, Weaving and Designs* (1979) describes how cloth is manufactured in West Africa. In this book, Picton and Mack examine how batik wax fabric functions in West African societies, which Shonibare incorporates in his artworks. This book provides a general background to the position that fabric holds in African culture. Picton and Mack illustrate that cloth is more significant than previously thought, as it is an important part of African culture and identity (Picton & Mack 1979:9–15). This highlights research questions regarding the reasons why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his work. Additionally, this book will help explore how Shonibare uses cloth to question stereotypes of culture, identity and the separation between African and Western, primitive and modern, and art and craft. Furthermore, Picton and Mack highlight the inherent value of fabric and pattern in African culture as they often serve conceptual purposes, such

as in rituals and in everyday material purposes as protection from the elements. This is an important theme in my research as I intend to interrogate the conceptual and subjective value of fabric and pattern in my practice. In similarity, E.V. Ulzen-Appiah's journal article *A Review of Symbolism in Indigenous West African Textiles* (2005) depicts fabric as a communication device within African culture (2005:109). This informs the research regarding how the artists Shonibare and Findlay use cloth to represent identity and race, because I use cloth to describe an aspect of my identity. This article is useful because it examines textiles in West Africa, including batik wax fabric, that Shonibare incorporates in his artwork. Findlay sent via post, articles by Leeb-du Toit, Charlton and Hofmeyr, and images of her artworks, which supplied further information on her works and the intentions behind them. This will address the research question about why and how Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery in her artwork.

I struggled to find sources on Tsonga-Shangaan cloth as Findlay appears to be the only author to have written in detail about the history of this traditional dress. Furthermore, I found little significant scholarly writing on Basotho blankets, but the National Museum of Bloemfontein blanket exhibition offered valuable information. There has never been a comparative discourse pertaining to Shonibare's works using batik wax fabric, Findlay's paintings referencing Basotho blankets and the observation of personal textiles in my paintings. This dissertation is intended to contribute to the debate of pattern and cloth in contemporary artists' practice. Furthermore, this research aims to investigate areas that have not been considered with regards to how fabric and pattern is used to explore the art and craft debate. The investigation aims to explore the current Fine Art context in that it is conducted using a discursive analysis of my painting practice and how it relates to Shonibare's and Findlay's use of textiles and pattern. Moreover, I battled to find reputable literature on the subjective approach to cloth and pattern, such as how artists respond instinctively to the colour, textures and motifs found on pattern and fabric. Through documenting and reflecting on my preference for fabric and pattern, I aim to understand better the personal approach to these subjects, rather than the purely theoretical and conceptual perspective that has become popular in contemporary readings of Fine Art.

The literature referenced above are examples of key texts that support the research. This allows me to address the key questions regarding the implementation of select textiles into Shonibare's, Findlay's and my artworks. Through these texts, I can compare my practice to

other artists, that allows me to comfortably navigate and validate the ways in which I appropriate and adapt fabric and pattern in my paintings. This will provide motivation to this research and the question of why I use pattern and fabric in my practice. Furthermore, the literature discussed above will provide the framework of the themes that underpin textiles in contemporary art.

## 1.7 Chapter Structure

The structure of this dissertation is as follows.

Chapter One explained the background and objectives to this study. I outlined the research questions that are essential to conducting a rigorous investigation and discussed the Practice-Based and qualitative methodologies that were applied in this research. The theoretical framework regarding art and craft debates that are central to the artistic evaluation of textile art pertinent to the investigation was discussed. Included in Chapter One was a review of literature that supports the research.

In Chapters Two and Three, the work of Shonibare and Findlay respectively is examined. I examine how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks as a metaphor for the relationship between Britain and Nigeria (Guha 1994). Shonibare's use of batik wax fabric provides insights into the ways in which cloth is incorporated into my paintings. Chapter Three investigates how Findlay incorporates Basotho blanket imagery in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) to reflect on the Sotho history that Findlay draws on in her paintings (Charlton 2007:13). The examination of Findlay's adaptation of textiles provides a comparison to my painting practice with regards to fabric and pattern.

Chapter Four turns to a discussion of my practice through a rigorous analysis of my paintings. This endeavours to show that my works share connections to contemporary artists, particularly Shonibare and Findlay. This chapter entails an investigation into how I use the pattern found on the buildings of Durban as an inspiration in my painting practice. This research shows that my work highlights the significance of textiles in ways that at first glance may not be apparent. For example, the textiles in my paintings intend to map the trade routes between South Africa and India. The discussion explores how I react

subjectively to the pattern and cloth that are referenced in my paintings. Chapter Four includes an investigation into how I use paint to experiment with the pattern and fabric in my artworks.

Chapter Five outlines how the comparative analysis of three artists' work has assisted in positioning my art in the contemporary Fine Art field. Furthermore, Chapter Five includes a discussion on how the research questions were addressed and how these have responded to the objectives that I set out to achieve. In this Chapter, I show how all three artists have challenged the art/craft debate through examining the depth of meaning evident in these cloths and pattern. Through interrogating the contribution to Fine Art that these artists have made with the use of textiles and pattern, I show that fabric has a greater significance than the value previously given to it. This Chapter investigates how two artists' use of textiles and pattern in their artworks has shifted my practice with pattern and fabric. Chapter Five discusses points that were discovered through the final exhibition and how the research could be developed in the future.

I will now turn to Chapter Two, in which I consider how Shonibare reflects on how batik wax fabric belies its African heritage in his key work.



## 2.0 Chapter Two: Yinka Shonibare — Dual Identities and the Use of Fabric as a Marker of Self

### 2.1 Introduction

The investigation into the different functions of fabric in contemporary artists' practice has led me to focus on the British-Nigerian artist, Shonibare. Shonibare was born in London in 1962, but grew up in Nigeria (Oguibe 1999 b). He studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Goldsmiths College of the University of London (Oguibe 1999 b). It is this viewpoint as a 'post-colonial hybrid' that informs his work and Shonibare produces art (Wyndham 2008).

Shonibare is a respected British artist. In 1994, at the *2 out of 4 Dimensions* exhibition at the Centre 181 Gallery, Shonibare displayed his famous *Double Dutch* (1994) painting installation (Oguibe 1999 b). Additionally, Shonibare was nominated for a Turner Prize in 2004 (Yinka Shonibare 2017). Furthermore, he was also named a Member of the 'Most Excellent Order of the British Empire' – MBE (Yinka Shonibare 2017).

I have specifically chosen to investigate the ways in which Shonibare uses batik wax fabric, because we both adapt cloth in our artworks. Furthermore, there are connections between the appearance of *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008), and my paintings of Durban, which rely on a grid pattern. In contrast, my artistic motivations are dissimilar to Shonibare's, in that my work does not concern a critique on colonialism and African identity (Picton 2005). Nevertheless, I am fascinated by the way in which pattern and textiles serve as markers of identity in Shonibare's artworks (Ulzen-Appiah 2005:109, LaGamma 2009:98). Shonibare's example is used as a comparison to my approach to pattern and fabric and is not necessarily similar to my practice. Additionally, his use of batik wax fabric as a tool to question art and craft hierarchies has motivated me to examine how my painting practice may challenge the value given to textiles and craft in Fine Art categories.

In order to discuss Shonibare's artworks, this Chapter will investigate the origins of batik wax fabric in the next section. Further on in this Chapter, I examine the painting installations *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008). Additionally, the installation *Victorian*

*Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) is explored. Although these artworks are not the most recent, they are the most relevant to the study. They illustrate the specific ways that Shonibare incorporates batik wax fabric in his artworks. This will help identify the artists' intentions in using batik wax fabric.

## **2.2 The origins of batik wax fabric**

The origin of batik wax fabric is an important aspect and through investigating it, I better understood the reasons why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks.

Akinwumi argues that the batik dyeing technique originated in India, and spread to Indonesia and Japan through the Indian rule of Indonesia before the thirteenth-century (2008). As a result of the Dutch colonisation of Java in the seventeenth-century, batik wax fabric was introduced to Europe (Akinwumi 2008). Following this, the Dutch produced their own version for retail, but the low-grade, mass-produced cloth was rejected by the Javanese people and was subsequently exported to West Africa in the nineteenth-century (Akinwumi 2008).

Thereafter, batik wax fabric was identified as 'African print', because the Dutch manufacturers printed cloth that incorporated many African symbols (Akinwumi 2008). For instance, during the 1920s images of local chiefs, and in the 1950s African politicians, were incorporated in the batik wax fabric designs (Akinwumi 2008) that evoked Africa's historical and political past (Picton 2005). By the 1960s, Akinwumi explains, 'cultural objects' were featured in the batik designs to symbolise Africa's independence (2008). Batik wax fabric shortly became a symbol of African pride, because the designs were labelled after popular African sayings, although the designs did not correspond with the title (Akinwumi 2008). For instance, in Figure 1 the pattern entitled 'condolences to my husband's mistress' sends a sarcastic message, but does not have an obvious connection to the pattern (Domowitz 1992). Furthermore, the manufacturers exported preferred colours to certain countries, such as blue designs that were sold in Nigeria (Akinwumi 2008).



Figure 1. Batik wax fabric. *Condolences to my husband's mistress* pattern. Domowitz, S, 1986. <http://www.jstor.org.ukzn.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/3337004.pdf>.

Adding to the popularity of batik wax fabric, Gillow explains that the cloth is cheap and easy to make: 'A sponge dipped in molten paraffin wax is applied onto mill-woven fabric as a resist to the dye to create designs, and the cloth is dip-dyed in a vat of chemical dyes' (2003:84).

By having investigated the history of batik wax fabric, I can analyse how Shonibare adapts the cloth in his artworks to question the stereotypes of African identity (Hynes 2001:61) in the following section.

### 2.3 Batik wax fabric in Shonibare's artworks

The particular ways in which Shonibare uses batik wax fabric are explored in this section. Furthermore, the central themes that Shonibare addresses in his work are notions of African and Western; identity and culture; art and craft; and authenticity. The discussion of these topics will help me understand how I approach pattern and cloth in a similar or dissimilar way to Shonibare. This will also assist in discovering the conceptual uses of fabric and pattern in a contemporary artist's practice. Furthermore, through reviewing Shonibare's works, I aim to address one of the objectives which is to compare three artists use of pattern and fabric. Shonibare's approach to pattern and fabric will be compared to Findlay's and my painting practice.

The painting *Double Dutch* (1994) consists of fifty small canvases covered in batik wax fabric; some are painted with impasto paint to hide the fabric beneath and others are left bare (Guha 1994) (Figure 2).

*100 Years* (2008) (Figure 3) is a painting that similarly features small canvases covered in batik wax fabric in a grid-like formation (Picton 2005). In comparison to *Double Dutch* (1994), *100 Years* (2008) features one hundred small canvases, and instead of a bright pink background (Guha 1994), Shonibare has painted the wall red.

*Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) is a large-scale work that features a furnished room with items of ‘Victorian and Baroque opulence’ (Wang 2009). According to Hylton, the armchair, chaise longue, carpet and the walls are covered in ‘homemade’ batik wax fabric (1999) (Figure 4). The fabric features a motif of black footballers (Hylton 1999).

Through investigating the use of batik wax fabric in Shonibare’s artwork, I aim to identify the intention of Shonibare’s approach to pattern and fabric, which is one of the objectives of this research. The way in which Shonibare appropriates batik wax fabric directly in his artwork assists me in understanding how he uses textiles to challenge class and gender divides (Jeffries 2017). Furthermore, batik wax fabric in Shonibare’s artworks is used to question the ‘exclusion of certain social groups and political agendas’ from the public and art sphere (Jeffries 2017). My painting practice seeks to recognise the value of pattern and fabric as many genres are still fallaciously disregarded in the Fine Art context, which is helped by examining the way in which other artists extract the conceptual significance of cloth and pattern. For example, Shonibare’s approach to batik wax fabric demonstrates the complexities of pattern and fabric as a socio-political tool in the art and craft debate.

### **2.3.1 Colonial history**

Colonialism refers to the settlement of people onto land with the intent of ruling and dominating this territory (Said 1993:8). This led to the ‘hierarchy of difference’ of economic, cultural and social circumstances between the ‘conqueror’ and ‘conquered’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to question the class and racial divides that are still apparent in society and the art canon, which is rooted in colonial history. In order to address the objectives that were set out in Chapter One section 1.2, the discussion on the colonial history of batik wax fabric examines the conceptual value of batik wax fabric as explored by Shonibare in *Double Dutch* (1990). Furthermore, section 2.2.1 reflects on why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in *100 Years* (2008) to interrogate the effect of

colonialism on Africa and Europe. Additionally, this discussion on the colonial history of batik wax fabric underpins further discourse on why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric challenges hierarchies such as art and craft, gender, class and racial divides, as discussed further on. At the same time, this debate links to why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to investigate his position in post-colonial British Fine Art society.

Shonibare investigates the tensions between Europe and Africa with the use of batik wax fabric. This is done in a clever way as he uses the often-overlooked colonial heritage of batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994), *100 Years* (2008) and *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) (Picton 2001:69) to provide an alternative view to the predominantly European account of colonialism in Africa (Wang 2009).

In *100 Years* (2008), there is a canvas per year of the twentieth-century, and half of the one hundred canvases are painted to cover the pattern of batik wax fabric (Picton 2005). Shonibare draws historical connections between the colonialism of Africa by Europe and batik wax fabric in his artworks, because the title *100 Years* (2008) may refer to the century in which Africa was colonised by European powers (Guha 1994). He does this to critique the racial and class hierarchy that colonial ideologies were based on (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Shonibare also uses the division between African and Western cultures in *100 Years* (2008) to question stereotypes (Hynes 2001:62). For example, African art and African culture was previously considered inferior to white Modernist art and Western culture, which Shonibare questions by using African signifiers such as batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994) (Oguibe 1999a:25).

Additionally, in *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) (Figure 4) the Victorian-styled furniture may symbolise the era during which the colonisation of Africa occurred (Guha 1994). Shonibare uses Victorian era furnishings to question the history of batik wax fabric as a colonial construct (Picton 2001:69). Wang describes that the Victorian furniture that Shonibare uses alongside colonial batik wax fabric portrays an historical account of the relationship between Africa and Europe (2009). For example, the African look of batik wax fabric belies the heritage of the cloth as a product of colonial rule in Africa (Guha 1994) (refer to pages 32–33).

Hylton suggests that the black footballer motif in *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) can be interpreted as a reference to Victorian Arthur Wharton, a ‘black’ British ‘footballer’ (1999). Simultaneously, Shonibare uses the symbolism of the footballers to investigate the colonial exploitation of Africa and its people (Enwezor 2003). Furthermore, in the title *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997), ‘Victorian’ can be interpreted as a critique of colonialism and Victorian ideologies (Wang 2009). According to Wang the ironic use of the word ‘philanthropist’ in the title of this artwork queries the pretext of colonialism to preach ‘enlightenment’, while the colonists were promoting oppression (2009).

I do not deal with issues of colonialism in my work, but the use of European and African cloth in *Peacock* (2016) (Figure 12), touches on the history that is apparent between the two continents. In contrast with Shonibare’s work, the use of African and European cloth is more to do with my preference for many different styles of cloth that come from diverse places than it does with critiquing the past. Additionally, it is because I grew up in Durban that I have been exposed to cultures that I have noted these textiles and use them conceptually in my paintings. The conceptual way in which Shonibare extracts the colonial background of batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1990), encourages me to explore my appreciation of pattern and fabric in my painting practice. For instance, the colonial history inherent in batik wax fabric helps me understand the conceptual value of pattern and fabric. This research assists me in approaching my painting practice with a new outlook of how and why I make my work for conceptual reasons. I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter Four.



Figure 2. Yinka Shonibare, *Double Dutch*, 1994. Acrylic paint on wall; emulsions and acrylic on 50 Dutch wax printed cotton canvases. Overall: 332×588cm; each panel 32×32×4.5cm. Private collection, USA.

[http://www.yinkashonibaremb.com/artwork/painting/?image\\_id=7](http://www.yinkashonibaremb.com/artwork/painting/?image_id=7)

### 2.3.2 African identity

Similar to Shonibare's use of batik wax fabric to examine themes of colonialism and post-colonialism, he uses batik wax fabric to highlight what it means to be an African artist living in Britain and how his perception of an ideal African identity has shifted in the contemporary world. This section on African identity aims to address the following objectives: to identify Shonibare's intention in using batik wax fabric in his approach to pattern and fabric; to explore the conceptual value of pattern and fabric; and to examine how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks to investigate his position in post-colonial British Fine Art society. Shonibare uses perceptions of batik wax fabric as an 'African' symboliser to debunk ideas regarding African identity (Guha 1994) (refer to page 32). For example, in the cryptic title of *Double Dutch* (1994), 'Dutch' refers to the manufacturing origins of the fabric in the Netherlands (Enwezor 1997), which is detached from its perceived 'African' heritage (Oguibe 2004:40). Moreover, batik wax fabric is often labelled 'Dutch wax' cloth (40). Hynes argues that, Shonibare refers to the true source of batik wax fabric in this work as not authentically African, but a product of interconnected trade between Indonesia, the Netherlands, Britain and Africa (2001:60). This illustrates the conceptual value that is inherent in batik wax fabric as Shonibare reflects on the cultural perceptions of batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1990), and not purely on its decorative and material properties (Hynes 2001:61).

Furthermore, Shonibare uses batik wax fabric and Euro-centric icons in *Double Dutch* (1994) to present an interpretation of modern identity (Picton 2001:66) as a reflection of the hybrid identity that he relates to (Oguibe 1999 b). According to Nikos Papastergiadis, the concept of hybridity challenges the false categories of identity as a fixed notion (2002:166) (refer to pages 18–19). Shonibare uses the notion of hybrid identity apparent in batik wax fabric in his works to disrupt the territories of identity (Picton 2001:66). This illustrates Shonibare's view of his own identity as a 'post-colonial hybrid' that emerged from African and British influences that extends to his approach to his art in the Fine Art context.

Moreover, Shonibare uses the Victorian-style furniture in contrast with the African icon batik wax fabric in *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997). He does this to muddle perceptions regarding African and European identity and stereotypes (Wang 2009). According to Wang, the 'philanthropist' is not present, leaving the viewer to interpret the identity or race of the protagonist (2009). Shonibare's approach to pattern and fabric is intended to challenge perceptions of identity and race that underpin hierarchies of value with regards to art and craft and culture.

### **2.3.3 African/Western**

The batik wax fabric in Shonibare's *Double Dutch* (1994) is used to evoke the separation between African and Western culture and art. This section will explore how Shonibare's approach to pattern reflects dichotomies within African and Western culture with regards to art and authenticity. African cultures were essentialised as 'primitive', which contrasts with the modern. 'Primitive' can refer to art produced 'before the Renaissance' (Harris 2006:251–252). 'Primitive' often refers to art that is not 'naturalistic' and does not represent the three-dimensionality of objects (Harris 2006:251–252). African art was often described as 'primitive', because its conventions did not match those of European art traditions, which were considered civilised (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). This underpins the objectives in this research regarding why the use of batik wax fabric challenges hierarchies of art and craft, gender roles, class and racial divides.

Within the polarities of African and Western cultures there are other defining characteristics such as race. Categories are often used to exclude and delineate groups of people. 'Race' is the classification of people into 'physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups'.



The idea of race surrounds the notions that personality and ideals are related to what race group a person is from. For example, defining African culture or art as ‘primitive’ would be assuming that where a person is from determines their innate way of thinking or behaving. This is similar to establishing that a person’s race prescribes set tendencies. ‘Race thinking’ incorrectly draws distinction between ‘civilised’ and ‘primitive’ and implies a ‘hierarchical system of people’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

## Culture

Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to challenge perceptions of culture (refer to page 18). For example, in *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997), Shonibare uses the African look of batik wax fabric to query images of the Victorian ideal (Wang 2009). Wang suggests that Shonibare challenges the perceived restraint and civilisation of Victorian Europe who promised to bring ‘enlightenment’ to the ‘barbaric’ cultures of Africa (2009) (refer to pages 15–16). Shonibare aims to investigate in his artworks how the Victorian notion of ‘enlightenment’ led to the division of Africa amongst European countries that oppressed African cultures (Wang 2009). The ways that Shonibare uses batik wax fabric illustrates the conceptual value of fabric and pattern, which is an objective of this research. For instance, Shonibare uses certain patterns within *Double Dutch* (1990), to identify with different cultures. The brash patterns on batik wax fabric conceptually represent perceived ‘African’ cultures.

Shonibare questions the disparities between African and Western cultures by highlighting how they have affected one another throughout history in *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997). For instance, the definition of post-colonialism debates this interchange of ideas between the colonised and the coloniser. Within theoretical and historical discourse, post-colonial relates to the cultures that have been colonised in the past and how that culture has shifted as a result of colonisation (Harris 2006:243–244).

To investigate how African and Western cultures have influenced one another, Shonibare juxtaposes ‘African’ batik wax fabric and icons of Victorian culture to challenge who is being represented in *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997). For example, the walls of the installation *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997) are supported by ‘two by one metre planks reminiscent of a play set’ (Hylton 1999) or period room in a

museum (Hynes 2001:62). I view that Shonibare uses this as a satirical play on how the European museums would have presented an inaccurate representation of how the ‘uncivilised’ African would live in rural village life.

The investigation into how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to question the colonial notion that African cultures are ‘primitive’ while European cultures are ‘civilised’ has illustrated how pattern can symbolise cultural identity (Enwezor 2003) (refer to page 15). For example, in *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008), Shonibare uses the clashing colours of the batik wax fabric, the paint used and the colours of the red (Figure 3) or pink wall (Figure 2) to present a work that would be considered ‘excessive’ by Modernist Art standards (Skelly 2017:1–3).

I use motifs from diverse cultures in my artworks in a similar way to the batik wax fabric imagery in Shonibare’s artworks. For example, I aim to critique the disregard of certain groups in the West, such as women and non-European artistic practices. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Four.

### **African Art/Western Art**

Considering how European cultures have previously been considered better than non-European cultures, the same is said of other categories. European art has previously been elevated above African art (refer to page 15). According to Oguibe, art has dubiously been reserved for Western cultures while African art was considered as an imitation of Western art (2002:45). African art has previously been falsely regarded as ‘primitive’, because it was not a life-like representation of reality (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007) (refer to page 15). This has been broken down with the new-found acclaim of African art as illustrated when Shonibare was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2004; a prize normally reserved for white male artists. This notion has been interrogated by Shonibare in *Double Dutch* (1994). For instance, the incorporation of batik wax fabric in Shonibare’s artworks confronts the unsubstantiated characterisation of art in the West as ‘Fine’ and artistic expression in Africa as ‘applied’ (LaGamma 2009:89).

Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks, because of the exotic look and the significance to black pride that this fabric symbolises, while ironically, it is an alien product

(Hynes 2001:60). For instance, in *100 Years* (2008) and *Double Dutch* (1994), Shonibare's 'crude' painting technique that incorporates bright pattern and thick impasto paint exaggerates the notion that African art is uncultivated (Harper 2004). In contrast, the neat squares that Shonibare paints on attempts to subvert the notion that European culture is 'civilised' (Harper 2004). This responds to the objectives that were set out in Chapter One, as I begin to explore why the use of batik wax fabric is used by Shonibare to challenge hierarchies of art and craft and culture. At the same time, Shonibare's example presents a valid argument for the conceptual value of pattern and fabric as it is used a more than mere decoration in *Double Dutch* (1990) discussed above. Furthermore, this encourages me to investigate the appreciation of fabric and pattern in my painting practice and how it has shifted through this research.

Similar to Shonibare's critique of the polarity between Western art and African art, I also aim to bring other art categories out from behind the shadow of Western art. For example, I intend to highlight the significance of women's art, textile art and craft, and art by different cultures in my artistic practice. For a more in-depth discussion on this, see Chapter Four.



Figure 3. Yinka Shonibare, *100 Years*, 2008. Emulsion and acrylic on Dutch wax printed cotton, and painted wall. Overall: 248.9×850.9 cm. Each panel: 29.8×29.8×5.7 cm.

Collection: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

[http://www.yinkashonibaremba.com/artwork/painting/?image\\_id=82](http://www.yinkashonibaremba.com/artwork/painting/?image_id=82).



Figure 4. Yinka Shonibare, (Detail), *The Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour*, 1996–97. Reproduction furniture, fire screen, carpet, props, stanchions, Dutch wax printed cotton. Measurements vary. Collection: Peter Norton and Eileen Harris Norton, Santa Monica, California. <http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/shonibare/parlour.html>.

### 2.3.4 Authenticity

In post-colonial discourses, the notion of an authentic culture was one that rejected the foreign influences of colonial rule on cultures and aimed to return to ‘pre-colonial traditions and customs’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). This falsely ‘essentialises’ fixed cultural practices as authentic and excludes other practices as ‘hybridised’ and ‘impure’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Consequently, this dangerously disregards the chance of development and change, which leads to ‘stereotypical representations of culture’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Shonibare tackles the preoccupation with the separation between cultures by illustrating how these cultures have amalgamated in products such as batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994).

Within the debate of art and craft and post-colonial discourse there is the preoccupation with authenticity. The notion of originality maintains the perception that cultures and identities should remain ‘pure’. Furthermore, cultures that were colonised from 1884 to circa 1914 were set on returning to their ‘authentic’ traditions (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). Stuart

Hall (1990), Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) suggest that ‘pure’ cultures falsely imply that identities and traditions are fixed. This led to the stereotypical grouping of people as ‘Other’, which marginalised cultures that did not share the Euro-centric viewpoint (Wang 2009).

Fine Art places primacy over artistic productions that are ‘original’ and ‘authentic’ (Auther 2004, Meuli 1997:205). African textiles are often wrongly dismissed in Fine Art, because they are copies (Auther 2004) of traditional designs (Bonifant 2015). The copy is dismissed because it is not seen as an ‘original’ creative invention (Auther 2004) (refer to pages 16–17).

Shonibare sets out to break down outdated notions of what is considered authentic in Fine Art and socio-cultural discourses (Oguibe 2004:40). For instance, in *Double Dutch* (1994), Shonibare uses the false view that batik wax fabric is ‘African’ to challenge notions of authentic culture in Fine Art regarding what is African art or European art (Picton 2001:66) (refer to page 14–15). Furthermore, Shonibare’s use of a mass-produced cloth to cover canvases in *Double Dutch* (1994) subverts the insistence that Fine Art must be an ‘original’ artistic creation (Picton 2001:69). This further debunks categories separating Fine Art and craft.

In *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997), the fabric that the furniture is upholstered in was printed by the London Printworks and presents the fabric as ‘ready-made’ (Enwezor 1997). The ‘ready-made’ questions the idea of the original art piece and its authenticity that is paramount to the measurement of an artwork as ‘High’ or ‘Low’ Art (Enwezor 1997, Meuli 1997:202).

In my painting practice the textiles that are used are considered un-original (Skelly 2017:75). This is intended to question the insistence of originality in art and culture which dangerously distances itself from the idea of trade and influence that is so apparent in a globalised world (Papastergiadis 2002:166). This is explained more thoroughly in Chapter Four.

### 2.3.5 Art/Craft

Within the Art/Craft debate, Fine Art has previously been regarded as superior to craft productions. Textiles and craft have erroneously been separate from Fine Art, because Fine Art was categorised as artistic productions that were elevated from the commonplace (Bonnet 1992, Skelly 2017:1) (refer to page 12). In the 50s and 60s, newfound critical acclaim was applied to craft practices through the use of cloth by some highly regarded Modern artists. These were called ‘soft sculptures’ (Constantine & Reuter 1997:117). For example, Robert Rauschenberg’s *Bed* (1955), and Claes Oldenburg’s *Soft Bathtub (Model) – Ghost Version* (1966) make use of cloth, which gives the sculpture a soft and flexible characteristic.

Shonibare’s appropriation of batik wax fabric challenges the hierarchy of art and craft (Guha 1994). His use of batik wax fabric questions the perceptions of what art is and who can make art defined by the Fine Art canon (Parker & Pollock 1981:51, Buszek 2011). Batik wax fabric in Shonibare’s artworks can be seen to challenge the exclusion of craft, the decorative and feminine (Skelly 2017:1), among other art practices from the ‘confines of the pictorial plane’ (Jeffries 2008:46). For example, in *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008), Shonibare interrogates the European notion of art superseding craft, and the significance given to ‘non-Western’ artefacts compared to ‘Western’ painting (Guha 1994) (refer to pages 13–14). He does this by using commonplace batik wax fabric as a tool to question hierarchies in the Fine Art discourse (Skelly 2017: Turney 2004). Through using everyday batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994), Shonibare defies the systems of Fine Art by maintaining that this mundane fabric is deserving of artistic analysis (Harper 2004).

Feminine items are often considered craft, because of their relation to the domestic realm (Greenhalgh 1997:28). According to Kokoli, textiles are now being viewed as ‘resistant to boxing in’ allowing shifts between ‘public and private practice’, and ‘formal and informal, daily and ritual’, which is a great tool to investigate ideas of art and craft, among other things (2017). Shonibare incorporates feminine items in his artworks to question the limitations of who can create art (Markowitz 1992). For example, *100 Years* (2008) and *Double Dutch* (1994) are abstract paintings that seem large at first glance (Harper 2004). The large abstract paintings *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008) is meant to be a satirical homage to Abstract Expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock (Harper 2004), who were thought

of as the ideal male genius (Parker & Pollock 1981:83, Minissale 2015). According to Harper, Shonibare directly debunks the notion of Fine Art paintings, as on closer inspection *100 Years* (2008) and *Double Dutch* (1994) are constructed of small canvases covered with batik wax fabric (2004). The smaller formations of cloth relate to feminine ‘pass-times’ such as quilting and patchwork (Harper 2004, Turney 2004). Shonibare uses the ideas surrounding craft as feminine to subvert the notion that ‘High’ Art is superior to craft (Harper 2004). The use of quilting has been used by artists such as Tracey Emin in *Everyone I have Ever Slept With 1963–1995* (1995) (Skelly 2017:77). In a similar way to Shonibare, Emin challenges and questions the disregard of craft, in particular textile art, that has been viewed as women’s work as ‘excessive’ (Skelly 2017:78).

The art and craft debate is a theme which joins Shonibare’s, Findlay’s and my works together. Shonibare’s work shares similarities to my own in that he also uses cloth in his works, because it is deemed ‘excessive’ (Skelly 2017:1). Shonibare’s work challenges many categories, one of which is the art and craft debate, which we both seek to break down so that our works with fabric may be considered more than mere decorative pieces and taken seriously as an artistic practice that comments on the world. Parker and Pollock defined the perceived difference between art and craft as art as having intellectual critique, inspiration and genius (1981:13, 82). If craft had these same qualities, then why could it not be considered art or as an equal to art? Shonibare’s work could be seen as intellectual and considered works of inspiration, so why should they be seen as merely craft and disregarded as decorative? In this research and practice an objective was to explore the value of textiles.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter, the discussion explored how Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks *Double Dutch* (1994), *100 Years* (2008) and *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* (1996–1997).

An aim of this dissertation was to question the way that textiles and pattern are often disregarded in Fine Art contexts. This Chapter entailed an examination of how batik wax fabric in Shonibare’s artworks may challenge the perception that pattern and cloth is merely decorative, mass-produced craft, and inferior to art (Auther 2004, 2008). Alongside the

dismissal of cloth as craft, many other art groups are considered secondary to Fine Art canons, such as African and female works of art (Markowitz 1994, Skelly 2017:1–2).

This Chapter included a discussion on how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994) to challenge modernist views of what constitutes Fine Art and craft (Picton 2001:69). Furthermore, I have illustrated how Shonibare adapts the mass-produced batik wax fabric in his *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997) to bridge the gap between culture and popular culture (Farrell 2004). This demonstrates the intentions of Shonibare's use of batik wax fabric to question what art is and what is not.

The discussion showed that Shonibare uses the falsely African batik wax fabric alongside European signifiers to challenge stereotypes of what is African and what is European (Harper 2004). In Shonibare's artworks, he illustrates that the defining terms 'African' and 'European' often intermingle and are no longer separate (Mercer 2002:119–120). Shonibare considers himself as a hybrid of both cultures (Wyndham 2008).

This Chapter examined how Shonibare debunks the previously held notion that African art is less valuable than European Fine Art (Oguibe 2004:33). He does this through incorporating the crude designs and daubs of paint that relate to batik wax fabric designs, which subverts the notion that African art is primitive (Picton 2001:67) (refer to pages 15–16). Shonibare's works have assisted me in thinking in both an art and a craft sense about my work. For example, his artworks have motivated me to explore how my work with pattern and cloth is intellectual because it describes identity and memories. Furthermore, it has encouraged me to explore the inherent contrasts that fabric and pattern bring to the fore in art and craft. On the other hand, it is also because of the instinctive preference that I have for colour, pattern and texture that Shonibare similarly investigates in his artworks (Harper 2004). I will discuss this more in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Having explored aspects of Shonibare's use of pattern and textiles in some detail, the next Chapter will focus on the work of Bronwen Findlay; specifically, the role played by pattern in her painting practice. This will provide an additional comparison to my approach to pattern.



## 3.0 Chapter Three: Bronwen Findlay — Pattern and Painting as Memory Containers

### 3.1 Introduction

During my Honours research (2013), I analysed the use of pattern and textiles in Findlay's artworks. This Chapter differs from my Honours research in that it explores Findlay's use of pattern and textiles in relation to my work. Furthermore, although Findlay uses a variety of fabrics in her artwork sourced from foreign and local places (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.), This Chapter focusing on her artworks that incorporate Basotho blanket designs.

Findlay was born in Pietermaritzburg in 1953. She studied at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and completed her Bachelors (1980). Findlay then completed her Higher Diploma in Education (1981), then went on to study for her Honours (1989) and Master's (1994) in Fine Art at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (Charlton 2007:24). Findlay lectured at the University of Durban, Westville; the Natal Technikon; the University of the Witwatersrand and at the University of Johannesburg (Charlton 2007:24). In 2002, she was nominated for a Vita Art award (Findlay 2007–2015). As demonstrated, Findlay achieved recognition of her work early in her career. Findlay is a well-educated white woman (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag.). From this vantage point Findlay engages in a discourse with pattern and Basotho blanket imagery in her artworks, which she uses to analyse themes of 'High' and 'Low' Art (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). This is an important aspect from which Findlay approaches her practice and influences the reading of her artwork, as her education and background gives weight to the use of fabric and pattern in contemporary art. For example, if Findlay was a female hobbyist who painted Basotho blanket imagery, she and her art would not be taken as seriously as a male artist who had formal training in, and historical knowledge of art (Adamson 2007:143, Greenhalgh 1997:37, Oguibe 2002, Parker & Pollock 1981:8–10). The art education that Findlay has given weight to the argument of the value of craft and textiles in her artworks which have previously been considered trivial (Skelly 2017:1).

My artistic rapport with Findlay stems from our mutual affinity for and insistence on textiles, pattern and vibrant colours in our artworks (Charlton 2007:13). Findlay uses pattern and

fabric in her artworks to question notions of value with regards to craft, the everyday and the domestic realm (Charlton 2007:13). She focuses on how pattern and fabric can be used to break down boundaries between class, race, gender and identity (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag., Skelly 2017:14). This has similarities to my approach to the art and craft hierarchy. We reference fabrics and ornaments that connect us to far-flung places with which we have originally no connection. For instance, Findlay incorporates textiles from China in her paintings (Charlton 2007:15, Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.) and I adopt cloth from India in my paintings. Findlay refers to *isishweshwe* and Basotho blanket motifs in her works (Charlton 2007:15). In similarity, I borrow South African *isishweshwe* fabric and the Namibian *Herero* doll imagery in my painting, which is discussed in Chapter Four.

Tsonga-Shangaan cloth, which Findlay considered extensively in her Master's dissertation, led to her association with Basotho blankets (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). Her dissertation examined how foreign items, such as beads and cloth from Portugal were used in the local Tsonga-Shangaan dress tradition (Findlay 1995:14). The network of exchange that Findlay discovered in Tsonga-Shangaan cloth through her studies, can similarly be found in the history of Basotho blankets, which I discussed on page 14 (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). This demonstrates Findlay's interest in the history of cloth that she refers to in her artworks.

In the next section, the exploration of the socio-historical importance of Basotho blankets to the Sotho people will provide important insight into Findlay's artworks. This Chapter will include reflection on Findlay's use of Basotho blanket designs in *Basotho Blanket* (2004), *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Blanket Part I* (2005) from the exhibition *A Blanket Story* (2005) (Charlton 2007:14). These artworks show the Basotho blanket motif in Findlay's artistic practice depicts her South African identity and culture (Charlton 2007:15).

### **3.2 Origins of the Basotho blanket tradition**

In this section, a select few Basotho blankets, such as the *Sandringham blanket*, the *Moholobela blanket*, the *Seanamarena blankets*, the *Victoria/England blanket* and the *Lehlaku blanket* are explored. This includes an explanation on how the blankets are worn by men and women and what they represent. Additionally, it investigates the cultural importance and meaning behind Basotho blankets. Through demonstrating how Basotho

blankets are significant cultural signifiers in Sotho society (Karstel 1995), I intend to understand how Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery in her artworks to signify the melting-pot of cultures of South Africa. In doing so, I aim to show how Findlay's use of pattern and Basotho blanket imagery can signify aspects of different cultures (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.) (refer to page 52).

The origins of the Basotho blanket tradition can be traced back to when King Moshoeshoe I received a gift of a blanket from an English missionary during the 1860s (Karstel 1995). Soon the Basotho blanket became a popular dress tradition amongst the Sotho people. For example, the blanket replaced the traditional leather *kaross*, as it provided warmth against the cold climate of Lesotho (British Museum 2017).

Basotho blankets are now part of everyday life in Lesotho. They are worn predominantly by Sotho people at initiation ceremonies, weddings, burials and births (du Plessis 2014:3). Each blanket has a specific name, purpose and situation in which they are worn (2014:3).

The Basotho blanket is conventionally worn with the 'pin-stripes' running vertically, which symbolises growth and well-being in Lesotho (du Plessis 2014:6). The 'pin-stripes' are never worn horizontally, as it is believed that this can impair growth, development and wealth (Karstel 1995). For men, the blankets are worn pinned on the right shoulder, with the darker side facing outwards and the tag at the bottom (du Plessis 2014:8). For a woman, the blanket is pinned so that it opens in the front, and the lighter side of the blanket faces outwards with the tag at the bottom (du Plessis 2014:8). Furthermore, a woman is expected to cover her shoulders, especially in the presence of her father-in-law, or at funerals and church gatherings (du Plessis 2014:3).

### **3.2.1 The Sandringham Blanket**

The *Sandringham* blanket, (Figure 5) was the first blanket imported from Scotland and was named after the Sandringham estate in England (Karstel 1995). This blanket is a prized possession in Sotho culture, because it has not been produced since the 1980s (Karstel 1995). This thick blanket is worn in the colder highlands of Lesotho. The *Sandringham* is produced with loops, which are cut after production and is decorated in solid and multi-coloured stripes (Karstel 1995).



Figure 5. *Sandringham* blanket. Karstel, M. The Basotho Blanket: Borrowed but Traditional 1995. [http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/journal\\_archive/00679208/1312.pdf](http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/journal_archive/00679208/1312.pdf)

### 3.2.2 The *Moholobela* Blanket

The *Moholobela* blanket, (Figure 6) is a traditional blanket worn during the *lebollo* initiation ceremony for Sotho boys (Karstel 1995). The title comes from the saying ‘*Moholobela wa dithota*’ meaning ‘I am from the desert’. The expression seems to imply that ‘After this journey I am not sure which direction I am going’ (du Plessis 2014:12). This blanket occurs in blue and red, although the red design is more popular (Karstel 1995).



Figure 6. *Moholobela* blanket. Cotton and wool, 155×165cm. Anthropology Collection, National Museum. Acquisition number:1376. Frasers.

### 3.2.3 The *Seanamarena* Blanket

The *Seanamarena* is the most highly regarded of the blankets, as it was originally worn by kings and chiefs. *Seanamarena* translates as ‘to swear by the king’, which is said to be interpreted as ‘where the king buys (the best)’ (Karstel 1995). Additionally, this may refer

to an ancient Basotho saying to conclude a story (Karstel 1995). There are different designs of the *Seanamarena*: the ‘chromatic’ or ‘Ace/Card’ and the newer ‘*Poone*’ (maize) design (Karstel 1995).

The ‘chromatic’ or card motif (Figure 10) is seen as the ‘traditional’ *Seanamarena* blanket (Karstel 1995). According to Karstel many, whether they were rich or poor, bought this blanket to elevate their status (1995). The name and design belonged to Robertson Limited, but Frasers Limited soon traded in the *Seanamarena* design under the ‘Victoria/England’ label (Karstel 1995).

The Basotho blanket manufacturer, Frasers Limited brought out the ‘*Poone*’ (maize) motif (Figure 7). According to Karstel, this blanket is seen at Sotho boys’ initiation ceremonies, and has more prestige than all the other blankets (1995).



Figure 7. ‘*Poone*’ (maize) *seanamarena*. Cotton and wool, 171×58cm. Circa. 2012, Marabastad. British Museum. Museum number: 2012.2018.2.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3460617&partId=1&searchText=Basotho+blankets&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3460617&partId=1&searchText=Basotho+blankets&page=1).

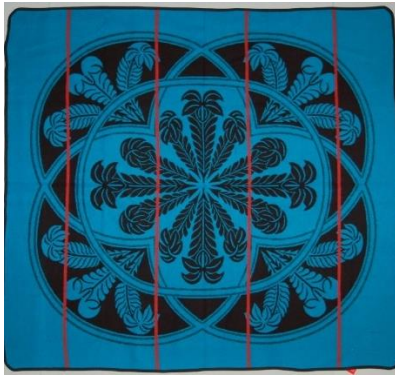


Figure 8. '*Lehlaku*' (feathers) *Victoria/England*. Cotton and wool, 154×169cm. Circa 2012, Randfontein. British Museum. Museum number: 2012.2018.4.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3460612&partId=1&ethname=6047&termA=6047-1-3&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3460612&partId=1&ethname=6047&termA=6047-1-3&page=1).



Figure 9. '*Badges of the Brave*' *seanamarena* in grey and black. Cotton and wool. Robertson Collection, National Museum. (Acquisition Number:17).



Figure 10. '*Chromatic*' *seanamarena* child's blanket. Circa 2012, Randfontein. Cotton and wool, 133×113cm. British Museum. Museum number: 2012.2018.3.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3460613&partId=1&](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3460613&partId=1&).

### 3.2.4 The Victoria/England Blanket

The ‘Victoria/England’ design features the *Lehlaku* design, (Figure 8), which is based on the crown and ostrich feather emblem of the Prince of Wales. This blanket commemorates Prince Edward of Wales’s visit to Lesotho in 1925 (British Museum 2017). Notes from the British Museum suggest that the *Lehlaku* blanket is an example of the impact of colonial rule on the people of South Africa (2017). For instance, when worn at commemorative events (du Plessis 2014:3), the *Lehlaku* recalls the British colonial forces in South Africa and Lesotho that influenced Sotho history (Karstel 1995). Additionally, according to Karstel, the *Lehlaku* design is renowned in Lesotho, because of its association with Queen Victoria who protected the Basotho people during the impending danger of war with the Orange Free State (1995).

The ‘Badges of the Brave’ (Figure 9) design (1897 c.) was produced by the English manufacturers Shrubsole of Wormalds & Walker Blanket Mill in Dewsbury (British Museum 2017). du Plessis explains that the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces insignia on this blanket commemorates the Second World War (2014:22), which like the *Lehlaku* blanket, memorialises British colonial rule in southern Africa (du Plessis 2014:22). For example, the springbok represents the South African Corps, Africa Division; the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces are represented by the rising sun with a crown; the New Zealand Military Forces are represented by the letters ‘NZ’ with laurels and crown; and the Royal Canadian Artillery is represented by a canon below a crown (British Museum 2017).

In summary, this investigation into the heritage and meaning of a select few Basotho blankets, illustrates the Sotho and South African cultural and historical significance of the blankets (du Plessis 2014:3). For instance, the imagery featured on the *Victoria/England* blanket commemorates South Africa’s colonial past and memorialises the Second World War (du Plessis 2014:22). The *Moholobela* blanket signifies the Sotho transition into manhood (du Plessis 2014:3–22). Basotho blankets function as geographic locators as the *Sandringham* is only worn in the Highlands of Lesotho (Karstel 1995). Furthermore, they serve as a remembrance of the important figures that have influenced the Sotho people, as the *Lehlaku* design memorializes the Prince of Wales’s visit to Lesotho (Karstel 1995).

### 3.3 Basotho blanket imagery in Findlay's artworks

Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery to analyse themes that she notes in South African contemporary society (Charlton 2007:15). The themes that Findlay explores are: the history of South Africa; her own identity; the culture and traditions of South African people; race and class divides; networks of exchange; and notions of art and craft. This section includes a discussion of these themes in more detail as an investigation into how Findlay uses Basotho blanket motifs in her artwork.

#### 3.3.1 History

Findlay is interested in the colonial history of Basotho blankets. For example, the Commonwealth insignia from 'Badges of the Brave' blanket is used in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) to examine the colonial history of South Africa (Krut n.d) (refer to page 52). Findlay also considers the introduction of the blanket to Sotho tradition from foreign British sources using Commonwealth insignia in Basotho blankets (Krut n.d.). This section will address the research questions and objectives regarding why Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery to interrogate the value of pattern and fabric in her works. Additionally, this will address the objectives regarding why Basotho blankets functions as a reminder of the colonial influence in South Africa.

Findlay considers that Basotho blankets are an interesting anthropological subject (Findlay pers.comms. 2013, March 2). She uses the springbok motif in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) to trace South African history (Human 2009:86). Human suggests that the springbok in Findlay's paintings sourced from Basotho blankets is a symbol that represents Afrikaner nationalism during British colonial rule. For example, in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) (Figure 11), Findlay mirrors the arrangement of the original 'Badges of the Brave' blanket (Figure 9) (Karstel 1995). The South African Military Forces, Royal Airforce and the Royal Navy insignia in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) reflect Findlay's association with these colonial emblems as a South African (Charlton 2007:15).

Furthermore, Findlay uses the 'Badges of the Brave' motifs in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) and *Blanket Part I* (2005) (Figure 16) to investigate how Basotho Blankets document Sotho history (du Plessis 2014:22, Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). The 'Badges of the Brave' blanket also



serves as a memorial to the twenty-thousand Sotho men who fought in the war (British Museum 2017, du Plessis 2014:22). Additionally, the ‘Badges of the Brave’ blanket is a tribute to Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee (Karstel 1995).

Findlay incorporates Basotho blanket motifs as beyond mere mimicry of a patterned surface, because the Basotho blanket and the motifs symbolise important Sotho and South African history (British Museum 2017).

Findlay reflects on the memories and the history behind the imagery on the cloth, which shares connections to my work. For example, my paintings feature motifs of *isishweshwe* cloth that recalls the history of South Africa with European influences. My concern with colonial history is not as outright as with Shonibare or Findlay, but *Peacock* (2016), still features a cloth that was produced by European powers and traded in colonised African countries. In my painting practice the patterns, textures and colours play a more significant role than the history behind the cloth, even though the history is an interesting aspect. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Four.



Figure 11. Bronwen Findlay, *Basotho Blanket*, 2004. Oil on canvas, 164×158cm. Private collection. Findlay, B. 2007. *Every Picture Tells a Story*:16.

### 3.3.2 Identity

In order to reflect on the objectives and research questions set out in Chapter One, this section addresses the concepts regarding Findlay's intentions in using Basotho blanket imagery in her paintings. This will illustrate how and why Findlay's use of Basotho blankets depict her South African identity and surroundings. This in turn will provide a comparison from which I can explore my own approach to pattern and fabric. Findlay incorporates items from her surroundings as a depiction of her experience of life (Charlton 2007:13). Charlton explains that Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery in her paintings as 'repositories of meaning' (2007:13), because they hold special significance to her. For example, Leeb-du Toit describes that the objects in Findlay's paintings serve as 'metaphors' for 'experiences' and 'memorabilia' of her life and people (2000: n. pag.). Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery to reflect a part of her history as a South African (Charlton 2007:15).

Findlay is interested in the historical aspects of Basotho blankets, but they also serve as decorative objects in her home and her paintings, which speak to her tastes (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). Moreover, Findlay scrutinises her position in society through using items that remind her of her home and her femininity (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.) as a documentation of her passage through life (Charlton 2007:13). The Basotho blanket imagery alongside jugs and doilies in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) are used to reflect on and challenge perceptions of Findlay's position as an independent and academic woman in contemporary society (Leeb-du Toit: n. pag.). For example, she questions preconceived gender roles in society that Findlay feels is contrasted with her position as an independent academic woman (Leeb du Toit 2000: n. pag.). This is done by deliberately using feminine objects and imagery such as floral designs in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) that are associated with domestic roles (Leeb du Toit 2000: n. pag., Parker & Pollock 1981:51, Skelly 2017:3).

Findlay's challenge of gender roles in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) as an exploration of her identity, is also linked to the art and craft debate. For example, contemporary artists, such as Findlay and Tracey Emin, are using floral designs and domestic items in their artworks to subvert the notion that Fine Art is a male-orientated realm (Minissale 2015, Parker & Pollock 1981:13, Skelly 2017:1). This highlights how Findlay uses Basotho blankets to reveal the complexity and value of pattern and fabric, which was an objective of this study.

Furthermore, this illustrates how Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery to challenge gender hierarchies.

Findlay's perceptions of identity extends to her identity as a white woman living in Post-Apartheid South Africa, which I also discuss in the next section. For instance, Findlay questions the perceptions of class and racial hierarchies that resulted in Apartheid and is rooted in value-based thinking that surrounds the Fine Art canon (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag., Parker & Pollock 1981:51).

The use of memorabilia in Findlay's artworks has similarities to my work (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag.), as I use family heirlooms and collected items in *Bedsread with Mandala* (2016) that hold special significance to me. The bedspread holds childhood memories of my mother and feeling safe. Findlay and I use this way of recording our life through bits and pieces to illustrate a part of our identity. Furthermore, the way in which Findlay is drawn to the decorative properties of Basotho blankets is similar to my subjective approach to pattern and fabric. These issues are covered in more detail in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

### 3.3.3 Divides

The separation of 'low' and 'high' class is used to fallaciously categorise groups of people and continues to encourage entrenched value systems in society and Fine Art contexts (Jenks 2005:32–33, Kapur 2002:15, Markowitz 1994) (refer to pages 13–15). Findlay incorporates items from various classes (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.), which she uses to question the division of people as well as the hierarchical view of art over craft. According to Parker and Pollock, craft is 'read on class lines' and is an 'economic and social system which separates artist from artisan (1981:51). This explains how certain practices, or items from groups of people could be considered 'low on the cultural ladder' which links to aesthetic taste which divides 'good' from 'bad' taste (Skelly 2017:14). Findlay uses a variety of fabrics associated with different groups of people, such as Basotho blanket imagery, Chinese cloth, and English Sanderson cloth in her artworks to investigate and challenge class and racial divides (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). This discussion will respond to research questions regarding the value of pattern and fabric. It will also explore how Findlay challenges hierarchies in art, craft, gender and class divides. In turn, these issues will help me to interrogate my painting practice and will shift how I approach my work with pattern and fabric.

Leeb-du Toit argues that Findlay contrasts elements from various classes to depict what is unexpected in her work (2000: n. pag.). Moreover, Charlton suggests that Findlay likes to juxtapose things that are ‘not normally seen together’ (2007:13). Through incorporating Basotho blanket motifs in her Fine Art painting *Basotho Blanket* (2004), Findlay attempts to disrupt what is considered ‘low’ class and what is considered ‘high’ class with regards to economic and social status (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). For instance, Basotho blankets are often worn by working class citizens in Lesotho (Karstel 1995). In contrast, Findlay is a middle to upper class, Fine Art educated woman who uses this imagery in her work (Jones 2011:52). A more direct example is Findlay’s work *Linoleum Floor* (2000–2001), which uses the cheap floor covering option that is used generally in low-income households in South Africa (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag.). This shows that she uses motifs from myriad cultures from diverse economic and class backgrounds.

Findlay uses the Basotho blanket imagery in *Basotho Blanket* (2004), *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Blanket Part I* (2005) as a platform to probe racial divides (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). For instance, the ‘Badges of the Brave’ Basotho blanket features British colonial emblems set amongst South African signifiers (du Plessis 2014:22) (refer to page 52). This alludes to the history of colonialism and segregation in South Africa, which has produced racial tensions (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.). In *Basotho Blanket* (2004), Findlay tries to negotiate these dichotomies with the use of traditional Basotho blankets that depict the fusion of South African, Sotho and British cultures (Charlton 2007:13).

In comparison to my painting practice, Findlay differs from me here as she explores racial tensions within South Africa. I choose to focus on the way in which these cultures have now become a melting pot. This is meant to reflect on the influences that I note in South Africa. This addresses the research questions as I am able to understand how Findlay’s example informs my practice and assists in understanding my work. For example, I can reflect on how my work focuses on the diverse cultures that have influenced my life in Durban.



Figure 12. Bronwen Findlay at home with Basotho blanket source, 2006. Findlay, B. 2007. Every Picture Tells a Story:1.

### 3.3.4 Networks

Findlay's environment is an important source of inspiration in her art. Findlay refers to items that surround her, such as memorabilia, heirlooms and found items in her artworks (Charlton 2007:13). These collected objects speak to wider networks and narratives of Findlay's life and experience of the diverse cultures in South Africa (Charlton 2007:13). This is because Findlay has found and collected these items throughout her life and they symbolise her experiences and memories. Through exploring this aspect of Findlay's work, I hope to address research questions and objectives regarding how Findlay depicts her surroundings and her South African identity with the use of Basotho blanket imagery. This in turn, will help me to analyse how my work has similar intentions and how my approach has shifted through this research.

Findlay's assimilation of Basotho blanket motifs in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) shows that she is interested in the 'backstories' of these textiles (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). She highlights how the jugs, doilies and Basotho blankets in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) are circulated through trade with other cultures or found in second-hand stores (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). Moreover, Findlay draws on how Basotho blankets evoke the histories of their past owners (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). She reveals that Basotho blankets and items associated with the commonplace are not static and banal (Charlton 2007:13). For instance, she investigates in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) how the domestic items she uses in the painting are passed on, handed down or discarded and recollect the past even though that history may be forgotten or not apparent (Charlton 2007:13).

Findlay incorporates the items that surround her from diverse cultures, most of them domestic items, as a way to question hierarchies that are rooted in gender, race and culture divides (Charlton 2007:13, Parker & Pollock 1981:51). This explores the inherent value in fabric and other domestic items even if they are sourced from low-income households or are everyday objects and have previously been disregarded in the Fine Art context (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag., Parker & Pollock 1981:9, Skelly 2017:3–5).

In similarity to my painting practice, I incorporate items that have been sourced from near and far-flung places that remind me of the places and cultures that they have come from. For example, the Indian table cloth in *Fevered Dreams* (2015) features a design of elephants, which to me is evocative of India as the Indian elephant is sacred to Hindus (Krishna 2010). I discuss this theme in more detail in Chapter Four.

## Culture

Findlay's paintings that incorporate South African colonial insignia and Basotho blanket imagery reflect on the diverse cultures that she encounters. Through incorporating Basotho blanket motifs in *Basotho Blanket* (2004), Findlay explores how the Basotho blanket has influenced Sotho culture and has become a traditional signifier of Sotho identity (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.) (refer to page 52). For example, by incorporating the 'pin-stripes' in her artwork's, as Hofmeyr argues (2012: n. pag.), Findlay explores how the 'pin-stripes' became an important cultural motif in Sotho culture (du Plessis 2014:2). The Basotho blanket manufacturers intended to fix the 'pin-stripe' fault, but were asked not to, because the 'pin-stripes' had become customary in Sotho culture (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). *Basotho Blanket* (2004), *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Blanket Part I* (2005) retain the error of the vertical stripes that indicated the end of a machine run (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). This illustrates how the Basotho blanket tradition was influenced by the manufacturing process of foreign traded goods (Charlton 2007:14).

Findlay refers to items from cultures that would not often be seen together in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006), as she places doilies alongside imagery sourced from Basotho blankets (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag.). This is intended to question notions of the hierarchies within culture such as racial and gender biases (Leeb du-Toit 2000: n. pag., Kapur 2002:15, Parker & Pollock 1981:51). These hierarchies are linked to the ideology of what constitutes 'good'

and ‘bad’ art and taste and as such Findlay uses these ideologies to challenge value-based hierarchies (Skelly 2017:74, Jeffries 2017).

Similar to my painting practice, Findlay reflects on the cultures that she notes in Basotho blanket imagery and South Africa as I too focus on the diverse influences in my life and my work. For example, I use Indian inspired, African and European cloth in my work because they are available for me to buy and then decorate my home in Durban. This is due to the occurrence of these cultures in Durban. For a more in-depth discussion on this turn to Chapter Four.



Figure 13. Detail of Jacquard woven blanket in the design of ‘*Badges of the Brave*’, in red and gold with four vertical stripes in black. Randfontein, 158×69cm. Circa 2010. British Museum. Museum number: 2013.2009.2.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3505331&partId=1&ethname=6047&termA=6047-1-3&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3505331&partId=1&ethname=6047&termA=6047-1-3&page=1).





Figure 14. Bronwen Findlay, (Detail) *Basotho Blanket II*, 2006. Findlay, B. 2007. Every Picture Tells a Story:6.



Figure 15. Bronwen Findlay, *Basotho Blanket II*, 2006. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 164×158cm. Private collection. Findlay, B. 2007. Every Picture Tells a Story:7.

### 3.3.5 Art/Craft

In response to the research questions and objectives that were set out in Chapter One, this section discusses how Findlay's approach to pattern and fabric challenges hierarchies of art and craft. This is intended to act as a comparison to my approach to pattern and fabric and help me in positioning my work in the art/craft debate. Furthermore, I hope that Findlay's example will highlight the value of cloth and pattern and demonstrate the intentions behind the use of fabric in her work. This will assist me in extracting the complexity of meaning of pattern and fabric in my work and help me to develop my conceptual and subjective appreciation of textiles.

Textiles are often disregarded because of their link with craft (Auther 2008, Skelly 2017:1). Craft was historically viewed as inferior to painting, sculpture and architecture which are considered 'High' Art processes; however, this value-based distinction no longer holds



much weight in the contemporary Fine Art context (Greenhalgh 1997:26, Jeffries 2017) (refer to pages 13–16).

Findlay disrupts the value given to ‘High’ Art processes (Charlton 2007:13). For instance, *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) (Figure 15) incorporates craft items such as a blanket, doilies and sewing utensils (Charlton 2007:14), which debunks what is labelled ‘art’ and what is dismissed as ‘non-art’ (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag., Jeffries 2017, Kokoli 2017, Skelly 2017:3). Craft items have been used by other Post-Modern artists as a ‘resistance’ to Modernist art values which praises the masculine as superior to sentimental ‘feminine’ art (Parker & Pollock 1981:83, Skelly 2017:3).

Findlay questions that craft is associated with the domestic realm (Charlton 2007:13). For example, Findlay elevates the ordinary by featuring textiles and domestic items in her paintings to disrupt the conventional notion that art should be elevated and autonomous from everyday happenings (Bonnet 1992, Charlton 2007:13). For instance, to elevate the mundane Basotho blanket to an art object, rather than a domestic item (Charlton 2007:13) the grainy texture of the print *Blanket Part I* (2005) (Figure 16) is transferred by pressing a towel into a soft ground-treated etching plate (Charlton 2007:15). Findlay deliberately mimics the surface of the Basotho blanket to reinforce the everyday functionality associated with blankets as washing and clothing items (Charlton 2007:13–14). The tactile and textural qualities of Basotho blankets indicate that Findlay draws on the domestic purpose that the Basotho blankets serve in *Blanket Part I* (2005) (Charlton 2007:14–15).



Figure 16. Bronwen Findlay, *Blanket Part 1*, 2005. Soft ground and deep etch with hand-painting. 75,5×110cm. Collection unknown.

<http://www.bronwenfindlay.com/exhibits.html>

Textiles, often considered as feminine work, are seen as functional, and an improvement on the home, but receives no artistic value outside of the home (Greenhalgh 1997:37–41) (refer to pages 8–10). Findlay’s incorporation of items associated with the ‘female realm’, such as Basotho blankets, subverts the erroneous notion that what men do creatively is considered ‘art’ while what women do is ‘craft’ (Markowitz 1994). Through selecting items that are associated with the ‘female realm’, Findlay challenges the assumptions of hierarchies associated with the art/craft debate (Jones 2011:51).

Within Fine Art, the decorative is associated with craft and banal labour, while art is associated with creative and intellectual achievement (Auther 2004) (refer to page 13). For instance, Fine Art is often associated with realistic representations of life (Harris 2006:251–252). By using decoration in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Basotho Blanket* (2004), Findlay parodies the association that ornamentation is associated with craft and thus devalued (Hofmeyr 2012: n. pag.). For example, the bold colours and gelatinous paint (Jones 2001:54) acts as an exaggeration of craft-like decoration. This subverts the value given to realistic styles of art as ‘Fine’, and how craft is often disregarded as ‘Low’ (Auther 2004, Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.) (refer to page 15).

Through juxtaposing a ‘High’ Art medium with craft-based mediums, ornamentation and items from the ‘feminine realm’ – all considered as ‘Low’ Art – Findlay questions the hierarchies of ‘High’ Art (Leeb-du Toit 2000: n. pag.).

In connection to Shonibare’s and my artistic practice, Findlay is concerned with the art and craft debate. Findlay focuses on the everyday and personal items in her works as a way to challenge the notion of Fine Art as being separate from domestic life (Greenhalgh 1997:37). In a similar manner, I paint items that hold sentimental value to me, which would be considered ‘kitsch’ as disregarded from the ‘High’ Art sphere. This differs from Shonibare’s work as his work with batik wax fabric has conceptual meaning but does not hold deep sentimental value that it does with Findlay and myself. This is mostly because the items that Findlay and I paint are collected or handed down by family members, whereas Shonibare purchases or designs his batik wax fabric as he needs it for his sculptures and paintings (Enwezor 1997).

### 3.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have investigated how Findlay incorporates Basotho blanket imagery in *Basotho Blanket* (2004), *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) and *Blanket Part 1* (2005). This discussion has enabled me to reflect on how Findlay uses Basotho blanket imagery as a comparison to my approach to pattern and cloth, which is an objective of this research.

An important theme of this dissertation was to interrogate why I use pattern and cloth in my artworks. This was attempted through examining how contemporary artists use the often-dismissed mediums of craft to disrupt primarily Western value-based hierarchies within art as a comparison to my painting practice. This Chapter examined how Findlay incorporated Basotho blanket imagery in her artworks to interrogate the boundaries surrounding craft and art. Findlay depicts domestic items, such as fabric and jugs in her Fine Art paintings to question the notion of what is considered art (Charlton 2007:13). Through examining the subversive uses of textiles in Findlay’s paintings, I hope to better locate how I subvert Fine Art and craft in my painting practice. I hope that this will allow me to experiment further with the dichotomies of art and craft, which is discussed in Chapter Four.

In the next Chapter, the investigation turns to how textiles and pattern are incorporated in my paintings. In so doing, I aim to compare and analyse how my approach to pattern and cloth differs from Shonibare's and Findlay's use of textiles. Through this, I analyse the reasons behind the incorporation of fabric in my artistic practice.

## 4.0 Chapter Four: Pattern and Fragments in the artworks of Joanna Smart

### 4.1 Introduction

My painting practice is greatly influenced by Shonibare's and Findlay's work with pattern and fabric. This dissertation is used to reflect on how I use pattern and textiles in my painting practice. Through this, I hope to position my painting practice in the Fine Art context. To do this, my paintings *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016) and *Indian Cushion* (2016) will be investigated. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the developments that have been made since 2014 in my artworks through reviewing the paintings *Nightscene* (2016), *Arabian City* (2016) and *Untitled* (2015–2016). I aim to show how this progress has challenged Fine Art notions of pattern and cloth as categorised as craft. Furthermore, I expect to illustrate how the patterned architecture of Durban has become a visual reference in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) and the exhibition *Pattern and Fragment* (2014).

This Chapter aims to test out the research questions and objectives that were set out in Chapter One. For example, it explores how my appreciation for pattern and fabric has developed and records the changes and discoveries that emerged as a result of this study. Chapter Four focuses on the conceptual and subjective value that I note is inherent in pattern and fabric and records my response to these aspects. Furthermore, this Chapter will discuss how my work compares to Shonibare's and Findlay's approach to pattern and fabric in more detail. I explore how I make my work and how I view my work has changed during this research. I also discuss how my work is used to describe my surroundings and reflect on my identity. Additionally, in this section I will address how my work contributes to the art and craft debate.

### 4.2 Textiles and pattern in my painting practice

Cloth and pattern are incorporated in my paintings, because I am interested in their use as clothing and decoration around my home. This section will show how my work with pattern and cloth might reflect my identity and the familiar. In the following sections I examine how I paint the items that have been collected from other places. Additionally, I investigate how

I experiment with the notions of cloth and pattern as a craft item. Furthermore, this section will explore the history of the fabrics that is also an interesting aspect that I like to contemplate.

Skelly discussed the ‘pleasures of looking and wanting to touch certain materials’ in *Radical Decadence: Excess in Contemporary Feminist Textiles and Craft* that deals with decadence and excess within craft and feminist art (2017:12). This could explain the tactile and visual appeal of the items that I paint and how I paint them with specific reference to textiles. For example, in *Thinking Through Craft* Glenn Adamson talks about how Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg explored the ‘relation between the visual and the tactile’ (2007:41) in their ‘soft sculptures’. Adamson explains that Johns and Rauschenberg interrogated the craft aspect of employing both optical and tactile aspects rather than the purely visual of Fine Art (2007:3). This is comparable to my painting practice, as I like to explore both of these aspects through paint. The textiles and patterns that are referred to in my paintings are also an exploration of the colours and textures that I have a preference for. Additionally, the different patterns and textiles from diverse cultures, featuring all sorts of designs is an inspiration for me to experiment with contrasts in colour, textures, scale and motifs. Furthermore, I like to analyse and transfer patterns and colours from things around me into paint on canvas, as I find that this is an interesting way for me to record and reflect on what I react to.

I specifically choose to paint in oil paint in my practice. Above all, the malleability of this medium is important to how I paint, as it can be diluted into a glaze, noticed in *Stromboli Flats* (2013), and thickened into impasto paint in *Arabian City* (2016). For instance, I enjoy the different ways that I can paint with oil paint such as with a brush, palette knife or stamps, as seen in *Untitled* (2015–2016). Additionally, I revel in how I can layer, stencil and glue things onto the canvas using oil paint, which can be seen in *Thai Silk Scarf* (2016) (Figure 28). Moreover, I enjoy how oil paint responds when I find a technique that mimics what I have chosen to depict.

The colour and richness that is found in oil paint is something that I respond to, as I have a preference for bright colours. I am also interested in the visual variation between colours, which is often heightened in my paintings to exaggerate this contrast. For instance, the bold pink and orange of the *isishweshwe* creates an interesting effect for me in *Peacock* (2016).

In this painting, I wanted to apply the pink and orange to a canvas to experiment with colour relationships. Furthermore, I felt compelled to imitate the dotted pattern design of peacock feathers found in this *isishweshwe* fabric.

#### 4.2.1 History

I incorporate *isishweshwe* cloth in my paintings because I am drawn to the colourful motifs; nevertheless, the history of cloth in southern Africa is an interesting topic to me. The *isishweshwe* fabric used in the painting *Peacock* (2016) has an interesting historical aspect (Smart 2016, March 25). For instance, the fabric is made using foreign Indian printing techniques (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelsner 2017). Originally, the indigo blue *isishweshwe* cloth was exported from India to Europe in 1858–9, and thereafter introduced to southern Africa by the German settlers who settled in the Eastern Cape and Natal (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelsner 2017). As a result of this, *isishweshwe* cloth was soon adopted by Xhosa women and replaced the traditionally worn animal skins (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelsner 2017). The appropriation of the once foreign *isishweshwe* textile into the South African cultures suggests how South African dress customs have shifted through the influence of colonial rule (Harvey 2004:1, Pheto-Moeti 2005).



Figure 17. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Peacock*, 2016. Isishweshwe cloth imagery in my painting. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

An additional example of the historical references in my work is *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016) (Figure 30). This painting features *Herero* doll imagery which represents Namibian women's dress (Durham 1999, Smart 2016, July 2). This doll (Figure 32) represents the traditional dress of the *Herero* women of Namibia (Museums Victoria, 2017).

The *Herero* dress tradition arose from the influence of Victorian fashion of nineteenth-century Germans who colonised present-day Namibia (Figure 18) (Museums Victoria, 2017). In *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016), I incorporate the *Herero* doll in an attempt to echo the colonial influence in Namibia (Durham 1999), which shares connections with the South African colonial history that I relate to (Smart 2016, August 3).

I am also intrigued by the history that these cloths and items represent. The colonial ties in *isishweshwe* and *Herero* cloth shares connections to the textiles used in Shonibare's and Findlay's work. For example, Findlay's use of Basotho blanket imagery in *Basotho Blanket* (2004) reflects on South African history (Charlton 2007:15) (refer to page 52), and similarly, Shonibare appropriates batik wax fabric in his artworks to evoke the colonial history of Africa (Enwezor 2003) (refer to pages 33–34).



Figure 18. *Herero* doll, Namibia circa.1964-1997. Museums Victoria, Australia. Item SH 970355. 15,5×26,5cm. <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/246761>.

#### 4.2.2 Identity

This section reveals how I use cloth and pattern in my painting practice in an attempt to depict my experiences throughout my life. For example, the specific things that I paint signify an aspect of my identity.

#### Durban

Living in Durban has helped me to discover motifs and textiles from various cultures. These encourage my preference for colour and pattern in my painting practice. For example, I use African, Indian inspired and European patterns and textiles in my paintings. This is because



I like to place patterns that would not normally be seen together, such as Indian printed cloth alongside lace in *Bedsread with Mandala* (2016) (Figure 26). The lace and the Indian printed cloth are from distant worlds, which is of interest to me. For example, the history behind the textiles and pattern, or the places where they have come from are an aspect that I like to think about.

The cloth in *Indian Cushion* (2016) (Figure 29), was brought from India by my uncle as a gift for my grandmother. The title of *Indian Cushion* (2016), was intended to suggest the Indian cultural and geographical origin of this textile. To me the cloth that used in *Indian Cushion* (2016), indicates and traces the trade routes between India and South Africa. The Indian cushion in this painting also evokes the influence of Indian cultures that I note in Durban. For instance, the Indian cushion features floral designs, which to me are reminiscent of an Indian pattern (Smart 2017, January 23).

While I do not aim to reflect on the history of the *isishweshwe* cloth in my paintings, the history, places and cultures that *isishweshwe* has derived from is a source of inspiration. Although I do not always wear *isishweshwe* cloth, it does remind me of my South African heritage, and is a symbol that I associate with my home town, Durban. To me the bright colours and busy patterns are reminiscent of African-style prints that serve as indicators of the familiarity of Durban. Simultaneously, I am drawn to the patterns on the *isishweshwe* cloth.



Figure 19. Joanna Smart, *Peacock*. 2016. Beads, isishweshwe cloth and oil on canvas. 120×90cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

### The familiar

I imitate patterns in my paintings found on clothes that I wear daily. According to Ulzen-Appiah, clothes are said to portray identity as they connect to the body through proximity (2005:109). Further, Pheto-Moeti discussed in his Master's Thesis how *isishweshwe* was used in Sotho cultures as 'self-identification' and that 'clothing can express personal identity' (2005). For example, in the detail of *Untitled* (2015–2016) (Figure 24), the blue design is sourced from a bright green and blue dress that I wear. This motif is used to depict how attire serves as a portrayal and extension of identity (Findlay 1995:61). The depiction of what I wear is an important way to record aspects of my life and my tastes.

The fabric and other domestic items that are referred to in my paintings have additional significance to me, because the objects are used to explore and reflect on my surroundings. For example, in *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016), In this painting, the design found on a mug (Figure 21) is intended to depict everyday life. Turney suggests that displays of craft items from the everyday act as an indicator of the 'self' and 'taste' (2004). I collect these items and paint them because I am drawn to the pattern and colour relationships. Additionally, I am interested in how the patterns translate into paint. In response to the

research questions, this explores how the textiles in my work describe my identity and surroundings.

## **Family**

Fabric and domestic objects are incorporated in my painting practice because they have a deep connection to family, memory and past. Turney argues that the display by the maker or owner of craft items communicates perceptions of family and the home to the ‘outsider’ (2004). For example, in *Fevered Dreams* (2015) (Figure 23), I refer to a tablecloth to recall family gatherings. To illustrate, the Indian tablecloth would cover the table at which my family would have shared a meal. This cloth signifies a daily routine and evokes for me the familiar. The tablecloth simultaneously reminds me of the connections that exist between family members and it relates to the position that I hold in the family (Turney 2004).

*Nightscene* (2016) (Figure 27) features the bedspread (Figure 44) that covered my mother’s bed. I use the bedspread in *Nightscene* (2016) to reflect on childhood memories of sleeping in my mother’s bed after I had had a nightmare. The imagery of the bedspread in this painting is intended to recall the important sentimental notions of the home and feeling safe.

## **Collected items**

The paintings reference textiles and ornaments that I have accumulated over time from second-hand stores in Durban. Furthermore, I employ hand-me-downs, heirlooms and objects and sentimental items that evoke memories of childhood and family. Often these objects decorate the house. Turney suggests that ‘home-crafts’ that are on display are a depiction of the identity of the maker (2004). To me ‘home-crafts’ would include the paintings that I have painted, and textiles and ornaments that decorate the home.

The doll in *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016), was brought back from Namibia, and serves as a memento of the journey with my aunt. The doll is used in this painting to reflect on my experiences of Namibia. For instance, the doll recalls the places I went and the people I met.

The second-hand kilim in *Arabian City* (2016) was bought by my mother from a Persian rug shop in Durban. This rug is most likely exported from the Middle East. The apparent Oriental influences of this rug is used to recall the trade routes between South Africa and

the Orient in *Arabian City* (2016), that I feel influence my life and home. The kilim signifies distant places which I have not been to. Alternatively, it evokes the place that I call home and the familiar as I see this rug every day.

I have endeavoured to show that my painting practice is inspired by my experiences of Durban. Furthermore, the patterns and cloths have a more personal aspect to them as they represent the home and the familiar. I have examined how the cloth and pattern is a way for me to demonstrate what influences me and what I wear.

I am inspired by the bright colours and busy patterns inherent in the cloth that I paint. I also experiment with how different colour and motifs in patterns react when I place them together. Such as a neat floral pattern, seen in *Arabian City* (2016) (Figure 34) alongside a loosely painted design from a mug, which can be seen in *Untitled* (2015–2016) (Figure 22). Furthermore, I like to juxtapose things, such as colours and items that would not normally be seen together. I enjoy the patterns and how they react when they are contrasted with other colours and other textures. This addresses the research questions and objectives regarding how my subjective respond to pattern and cloth in this research.



Figure 20. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Nightscene*, 2016. The pattern sourced from an embroidered, beaded and sequined satchel. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 21. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Persian Carpet with Bag*, 2013–2016. The pattern sourced from a mug. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 22. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Untitled*, 2015–2016. The pattern sourced from a mug. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 23. Joanna Smart, *Fevered Dreams*, 2015. Oil on canvas. 100×70cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2016.



Figure 24. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Untitled*, 2015–2016. The blue and green pattern from a dress. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 25. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Bedspread with Mandala*, 2016. Lace alongside Indian cloth. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2016.



Figure 26. Joanna Smart, *Bedspread with Mandala*. 2016. Lace, hessian bag and oil on canvas. 120×90cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2016.





Figure 27. Joanna Smart, *Nightscene*, 2016. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 70×90cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

#### 4.2.3 Art, craft and 'women's work'

Within Fine Art, it has been accepted that art is associated with thought while craft is associated with daily chores (Markowitz 1994). Only recently has the art and craft divide been challenged (Bonnet 1992) (refer to pages 13–15). I do not agree with the dismissal of craft practices in Fine Art contexts. In my painting practice, I have tried to break down the misplaced disregard of textile art and craft as inferior to art. Skelly describes that the use of fabric and pattern in contemporary artists' works is not to 'celebrate domesticity'. For example, the use of textiles in Tracey Emin's and Ghada Amer's works is used specifically because it is seen as 'excessive' and is the best tool to represent the 'ostensible excesses' of women (Skelly 2017:3).

In order to examine the divide between art and craft I paint in a certain way. For instance, I paint by applying multiple glazes to my paintings to build up thin translucent layers. I believe that the repetitive nature of the layers of glazes has similarities to craft because both require effort and skill (Dormer 1998:40). I use the concept of repetition in my paintings to question hierarchies in art. For example, repetition is defined as below art practices because it is considered a craft technique (Skelly 2017:75). This is because I consider that the slight



differentiations between glaze thickness and colour can become more noticeable and more intriguing through intense looking and contemplating. For example, the small differences in a painting are as a result of how much linseed oil is added to a mix of colour, or the visual effect of multiple layers of glazes, which is intriguing to me.

Within Fine Art discourses the commonplace was distinct from art, because it was viewed as banal and not worthy of representation (Bonnet 1992). To examine the hierarchy of art and craft the paintings feature specific subject matter. For example, through incorporating the craft items in my paintings, I intend to disrupt the view that domestic items are banal and limited to the realm of craft.

In the painting *Indian Cushion* (2016), the domestic cushion in a Fine Art painting is an attempt to elevate craft from the everyday. For example, I give the craft object value, because I highlight the familiar memories or experiences that I attach to the cushion through painting it. To support this idea, Turney argues that by representing crafts associated with the home in artworks, the artist applies sentimental value to the craft object, which questions the separation of art and craft (2004). Additionally, to subvert the functionality of the cushion as a domestic item in *Indian Cushion* (2016) (Figure 29), I do not mimic a realistically-sized cushion. I believe that the unrealistic, ‘larger-than-life’ size of the cushion disguises the source material.

This differs from Findlay as some of her paintings recall the size of the original material. For example, the size of Findlay’s *Basotho Blanket* (2004) is derived from the function of the Basotho blanket as used for washing and warming bodies (Charlton 2007:15). According to Charlton, the size and title of *Basotho Blanket* (2004) is intended to provide a clue to the reference material of the painting (2007:14). Furthermore, Charlton describes that Findlay uses domestic items in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) in an attempt to defy customary beliefs regarding hierarchies of value that surround discourses of art (2007:13) (refer to pages 62–65).

The paintings incorporate textiles that are often disregarded as ‘women’s work’ (Auther 2008). Although both men and women wear clothes, textiles are considered a part of the ‘female realm’ (Auther 2008). For instance, Parker describes embroidery, which can be

viewed as textile art, as being considered an expression of femininity and categorised as craft (2010:5). Picton and Mack argue that textile art is often seen as a hobby for women and never as a profession, because it is included in conventional domestic routines (1979:21) (refer to pages 8–9). This can be explained by the use of cloth to conceal the body for modesty and to protect from the elements (Picton & Mack 1979:9). In contrast, I use cloth and pattern to challenge the notion of craft and decoration as regarded as below Fine Art, because it can be seen as contradictory to Modernist art and is used to ‘refuse gendered norms’ (Jeffries 2017, Skelly 2017:4). Furthermore, cloth is used in ‘radical ways’ by contemporary artists such as Tracey Emin and Ghada Amer to question the ideologies of ‘what art is and what it should be made from’ (Skelly 2017:4).

Turney debates in *Here’s One I made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain* that modern art is a reaction against the domestic and feminine, and as such objects of the home are considered as disruptive to notions of modern art (2004). I disagree that textiles are ‘women’s work’. I explore notions of textile art as feminine in my paintings. For instance, my painting practice, which is defined as a Fine Art process (Greenhalgh 1997:27), is set alongside textiles and textile imagery. This is done in an attempt to try to disrupt the separation between art and craft, as I apply textiles and textile imagery on canvas, which is displayed in a Fine Art gallery (Turney 2004).

In Chapter One, I investigated how Auther describes how items related to the feminine are viewed as irrelevant, because they are seen merely as ‘pass-times’ (2008). I aim to disrupt this way of thinking with regards to feminine items in my painting practice. By incorporating items from the ‘female realm’ in my paintings, I attempt to illustrate the value and complexity inherent in domestic items. To illustrate, Turney describes that craft objects of the home hold sentimental meaning as an indicator of ‘time, people, places, experiences and emotions’ for the owner of the object (2004). While the object would be treasured by the owner, it would be overlooked as an unimportant item by an ‘outsider’ (2004). For instance, *Thai Silk Scarf* (2016) endeavours to break down the perceived insignificance of cloth and pattern, because the scarf – a craft item – was a gift from my mother that she brought back from her travels to Thailand and holds special significance to me. Parker and Pollock describe in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981), that the notion of femininity was ‘imposed’ on women and was not ‘natural’ (1981:41). For instance, women were

expected to embroider and make ‘feminine’ artworks that demonstrated their femininity as an ‘extension of her womanliness’ (Parker & Pollock 1981:58).



Figure 28. Joanna Smart, *Thai Silk Scarf*, 2016. Oil and mixed media on canvas. Private collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

Similar to my work, Findlay’s use of doilies and sewing utensils in *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) questions the disparity between certain practices as defined as craft and others as Fine Art (Charlton 2007:13) (refer to pages 13–15). Additionally, Shonibare paints on small square batik covered canvases in *Double Dutch* (1994) and *100 Years* (2008), which evoke ‘quilting’ and ‘feminine paraphernalia’ (Harper 2004). This shares connections with *Bedspread with Mandala* (2016), which incorporates lace trimmings, which could also be perceived as ‘feminine paraphernalia’.

‘Kitsch’ describes items that are garish, distasteful or too sentimental (Soanes 2007:497). Greenberg describes ‘kitsch’ as everything that is fake in contemporary society, as ‘kitsch’ includes items of popular culture and mass-produced items (1939). Sam Binkley argues that ‘kitsch’ is no longer considered to be low on the ‘cultural ladder’ through the disruption of ‘taste hierarchies’ associated with ‘High’ and ‘Low’ Art by sociologists (2000). Furthermore, Binkley describes ‘kitsch’ as reactionary against ‘high culture’ associated with hierarchies of art and class (2000).

The use of lurid colours and intense patterns could be seen as reactionary against the notion of ‘kitsch’ and art. I attempt to do this by using bright colour palettes in my paintings, because I am visually attracted to garish colour. Additionally, I use intricate patterns in my work because I have a preference for pattern. To illustrate, *Indian Cushion* (2016), which features lurid colours and intense pattern could be seen to question the notion that fabric is decorative, ‘Low’ Art and therefore considered frivolous (Auther 2004,2008, Skelly 2017:3).

Similar to my work, the bright colour in Shonibare’s works conveys extravagance (Downey 2005). Moreover, Findlay’s paintings feature tactile elements and bold colour palettes as a descriptive element of the source material. According to Charlton, Findlay uses the bold colours to explore the value of the decorative and ordinary (2007:13). Findlay uses decoration in an attempt to subvert the reasoning that Fine Art should never be ‘kitsch’, decorative or pretty (Auther 2004, MacKenny 2002).

The above discussion of art and craft intends to respond to the objectives and research questions of this study. For instance, it attempts to position my painting practice in the art and craft debate and explores how my work might contribute to that debate. Additionally, the discussion reflects to conceptual value of pattern and fabric in my work as I explore how cloth challenges hierarchies. This also acts as a comparison to how Shonibare and Findlay use cloth and pattern as a tool to question biases within culture and art. Through this my appreciation of fabric has deepened. It has encouraged me to investigate the changes in my practice, and has assisted me in understanding my work, as I discuss in Chapter Five.

## **Originality**

In Euro-centric art, individuality is an aspect that separates Fine Art from craft (Meuli 1997:202) (refer to pages 16–17). Turney explains that craft objects often mimic pre-existing designs or artworks and are considered ‘in-authentic’ and ‘un-original’ (2004), which is associated with elements of ‘kitsch’ (Binkley 2000, Greenberg 1939). This is particularly the case with craft that features cloth as a medium. For example, mass-produced textiles, such as batik wax fabric, are associated with quantity and standardisation rather than individuality (Lucie-Smith 1981:185). Meuli argues that this reinforces the Western idea that most printed cloth is a copy or imitation of an original (1997:202). By contrast, in West

African mud cloth, as Bonifant suggests, the duplication of an ‘existing design’ was considered an essential skill (2015).

I disagree that textiles are copies. In my painting practice, I imitate the imagery and texture of fabric, but in some cases I glue the cloth itself onto the painting, such as in *Nightscene* (2016) and *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016). In doing so, this intends to examine what is the original and what is the copy (Turney 2004). In this way, I endeavour to blur the boundaries between the painting and the textile. This poses questions about what is the art object and what is the subject matter? I attempt to use the reiteration of pattern in my paintings to break down the Fine Art notion that art is ‘original’ while craft is a ‘copy’ (Meuli 1997:202, Turney 2004) (refer to pages 16–17). Furthermore, I wanted to see how my painting would respond to having the source material directly on the canvas. Would my paint application become neater? Would I imitate the cloth and pattern more? Would I be able to experiment with the pattern more?



Figure 29. Joanna Smart, *Indian Cushion*, 2016. Oil on canvas. 100×100cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 30. Joanna Smart, *Namibian Doll*, 2013-2016. Oil on canvas. 42×59cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2015.



Figure 31. Joanna Smart, *Untitled*, 2013. Oil on canvas. 59×42cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2014.



Figure 32. *Herero* doll, Namibia. Photograph by Joanna Smart. 2014.

### 4.3 Disruption

Following a test exhibition in the Jack Heath Gallery in May 2016, it was suggested by my supervisors that I had an adequate number of paintings. Once in the gallery space, the differences between the many works became quite muted, and it was apparent that the paintings required more variety between impasto paint and thin glazing (Spencer & Hall, pers. comms. 2016, May 25). Through intense contemplation and reflection towards a resolution, working and re-working of paintings, I attempted to manipulate and challenge my paintings (Smart 2016, June 8).

At the beginning of this assessment I did not know how to push these paintings. I began to realise that I needed to clarify what I thought textiles were (Smart 2016, June 18). I documented the adjectives or terms that can be associated with textiles and pattern, and then worked with the opposite of those adjectives (Smart 2016, October 23). For example, if a textile was symmetrical I could incorporate asymmetry in my painting, I would deliberately make it asymmetrical to experiment with it. Furthermore, I wanted to experiment with how the pattern changed visually.

As a consequence of this assessment, I developed the painting *Untitled* (2015–2016). I incorporated impasto paint in the original night-time view of the Durban apartment block that contrasted with the thin glazes and created a variation in depth. I layered many different motifs sourced from clothing with the intent to create a busy pattern. Furthermore, in

*Untitled* (2015–2016), I utilised complimentary and bright colours against dark or pale tones to play with the colour relationship of the painting (Smart 2016, November 2). Through questioning and experimenting with the visual associations of fabric I endeavoured to uncover the complexities of cloth as beyond mere mimicry.

*Nightscene* (2016) featured a design from a bedspread along with imagery from a Durban apartment block. This painting required a different approach from *Untitled* (2015–2016), as it had different imagery and textures in various stages of development, some of which I was happy with and some I was not. I glued a piece of the bedspread over half of the painting to shift the notion of what was the textile and what was the painting. Additionally, I repeated one motif continuously, so that it became a blurred and unrecognisable image (Smart 2016, October 16). The repeated pattern of the bedspread that I use in *Nightscene* (2016), is intended to challenge the notion that fabric is non-art and not worthy of aesthetic appreciation (Markowitz 1994, Harper 2004) (refer to page 13).

After the development of *Untitled* (2015–2016) and *Nightscene* (2016), it was suggested by my supervisors to continue along the same path with two other paintings (Hall & Spencer pers. comms. 2016, October 20). I thought that this was a brilliant idea, as I noticed the difference that the alterations provided to *Untitled* (2015–2016) and *Nightscene* (2016).

The paintings *Arabian City* (2016) and *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016), did not need as significant amount of work as *Untitled* (2015–2016) and *Nightscene* (2016), because I did not want all the paintings to be at a similar stage. This was a deliberate choice, because I think that the dissimilarities between the various patterns, textures, colours, translucency and opaqueness in the paintings provide interest.

In *Arabian City* (2016), the kilim featured a bright design of stylised tree-like shapes, but the ‘finished’ painting did not seem to capture the textures and colours of the original carpet. To create a variation in texture and colour, I superimposed a night scene of a building façade over most of the painting that I considered improved the painting, but it still lacked a liveliness. *Arabian City* (2016) required a few alternative designs, and a variation in scale to contrast with the monotonous sequence of motifs.



In 2014, I altered *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016) by painting over the original painting of the image of the Durban city with an image of my mother's Persian carpet, which hangs from a wall in my home. In 2016, I thought that this painting needed more interest, as the image of the carpet was flat and two-dimensional, and the patterns were too similar in size. *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016) required a few interesting patterns sourced from an old dress, lace trimmings from my mother's sewing box and a change in colour palette (Smart 2016, November 26). I used the lace in *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016), because it is associated with femininity (Auther 2004, Turney 2004). I also wanted to see how the lace would respond to the Persian carpet design, as they are different textures and feature different colours (Smart 2016, November 3).

The disruption in my painting practice that was discussed in this section addresses the research questions and objectives regarding how my appreciation of pattern and fabric has developed. For instance, it has been noted that my use of pattern, colour and texture has been widened and investigated more thoroughly, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five. The changes that occurred with regards to my painting as a consequence of this research were explored through an in-depth record of my painting practice and the thoughts behind that practice. Positioning myself in relation to other artists has assisted my work in that I have the tools to compare my work to other contemporary artists as well as discovering and exploring the complexity of value that is inherent in fabric and pattern.



Figure 33. Joanna Smart, *Untitled*, 2015–2016. Mixed media on canvas. 80×70cm. Artist's Collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 34. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Arabian City*, 2016. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 35. Joanna Smart, *Arabian City*, 2016. Mixed media on canvas. 100×100cm.

Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 36. Joanna Smart, *Persian Carpet with Bag*, 2013-2016. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 91×71cm. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

#### 4.4 Buildings

In my Honours practical research, I painted several iterations of apartment buildings near the Durban beachfront. Although fabric and buildings do not have obvious connections, I consider that they rely on the play between the differences and similarities of motifs.

Additionally, I consider that buildings incorporate multiple small units that create a larger picture, in the same way that fabric is made up of smaller motifs on a larger background. I experiment with the use and disruption of repeat motifs and the exaggerated colours inspired by fabric in my paintings of buildings, which can be noticed in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) (Figure 40). I show this link between the designs of buildings in Figure 37, and Kente fabric in Figure 38. Furthermore, I respond visually to the patterns in buildings because I like to experiment with the sequence of colours and shapes (Smart 2016, March 2).



Figure 37. Joanna Smart, *Untitled*, 2013. Oil on canvas. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2014.

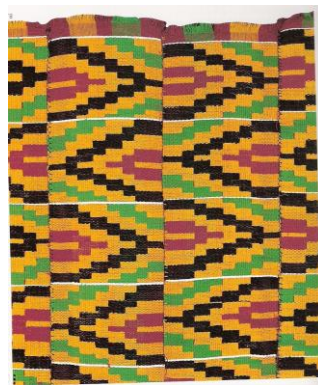


Figure 38. Strip-woven Kente, Ghana. In *Exploring Identity: The art of El Anatsui and Kwesi Owusu-Ankomah*, H.R Ringle, 2013. Master's thesis, University of Texas:29. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/21230/RINGLE-THESIS-2013.pdf?sequence=1>

#### 4.4.1 History

The buildings that I depict are a consideration of the city of Durban where I have lived with my family throughout my life. Some of the buildings have a deep connection to the family. For example, the building represented in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) (Figure 40) is the beachfront apartment where my mother, her siblings, and my grandparents resided when they moved from Kenya to Durban. I have used the building's patterned façade in the painting. This building represents more than a pattern, or everyday object as it holds special importance for me and my family (Smart 2016, January 23). Furthermore, the paintings of Durban are personal expressions for me, as Turney suggests the hours of work captured in 'physical form' in a craft object can be seen as a 'cultural marker' (2004).

#### 4.4.2 Disruption of pattern

Taking into account how Dormer describes what is considered as craft, the paintings of buildings would be considered craft (1994:8,40), because they involve repeat motifs of squares. For example, the square motifs in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) are painted using a repeated task. In similarity to *Stromboli Flats* (2013) and the installation *Pattern and Fragment* (2014) (Figure 39), Shonibare's *Double Dutch* (1994) (Figure 2) subverts the large grid associated with Euro-centric art by using smaller pieces to make up a whole (Harper 2004) (refer to page 33).

*Stromboli Flats* (2013) recalls memories and experiences that I have encountered in Durban, as well as places that I associate with the history of my family. The buildings signify where I come from as they depict a 'sense of the home' or the 'familiar' (Turney 2004). Furthermore, I have represented this building in an attempt to record the 'passage of time, memories of people, places and experiences' that I have encountered (Turney 2004). For instance, a representation of a building may seem unremarkable to an 'outsider' because the building may seem 'familiar', but Turney suggests that the craft object or what is chosen to be represented is important to the maker (2004).

I often mix up parts of the buildings, because I am interested in how the patterns respond with paint. I do not choose to imitate the buildings realistically, but I deliberately choose to experiment with certain elements that I consider will help me to explore pattern and colour. For example, often some of the colours and shapes are not sourced from the building itself and I have selectively chosen to exclude a part of the building. To illustrate, in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) I have deliberately exaggerated the intensity of the colours (Smart 2016, April 5). In response to the research questions and objectives, this section investigates how the building and patterned motifs in my work are an exploration of my preference for pattern, texture and colour.



Figure 39. Joanna Smart, (Detail) *Pattern and Fragment*, 2014. Oil on canvas. Measurements vary. Artist's collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2014.



Figure 40. Joanna Smart, *Stromboli Flats*, 2013. Oil on canvas. 50×50cm. Private collection. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2014.





Figure 41. Source material, Stromboli Flats, Durban. Photograph by Joanna Smart. May 2016.



Figure 42. Source material, Windermere Flats, Durban. Photograph by Joanna Smart. October 2013.



Figure 43. Source material. Persian carpet. Photograph by Joanna Smart, June 2016.



Figure 44. Source material. Bedspread. Photograph by Joanna Smart, August 2017.



Figure 45. Source material. Patterned dress. Photograph by Joanna Smart. August 2017



Figure 46. Source material. Sequined bag. Photograph by Joanna Smart. August 2017.



Figure 47. Source material. Throw.

Photograph by Joanna Smart. August 2017



Figure 48. Source material. Kilim.

Photograph by Joanna Smart. August 2017.

## 4.5 Conclusion

This Chapter aimed to analyse the appropriation of cloth and pattern in my artistic practice. I intended to demonstrate that the subject of my paintings are items that I use to decorate the house and constitute my surroundings. These objects are subjects of the paintings as a representation of personality, identity and tastes (Binkley 2000, Turney 2004).

Chapter Four recounted the important arguments regarding how I use fabric and pattern in my artworks. I have discussed how I experiment with and respond to pattern and colour in cloth and in buildings as I am visually attracted to these elements.

The next Chapter will summarise the research that was gathered and learned in this dissertation. I will conclude what was achieved in the theory and practical component of the Master's research. Chapter Five aims to explore how the review of my work alongside Findlay's and Shonibare's work has changed my conceptual and painting practice.



## 5.0 Chapter Five: Conclusion

This research encouraged me to account for and examine the incorporation of cloth in my paintings. Additionally, the research has explored how my approach to fabric and pattern has revealed its conceptual and material value. It has motivated me to explore my preference for pattern and fabric. The intention was to explore the importance of fabric and pattern as a medium in the work of two contemporary artists to assist with positioning my practice in the current Fine Art context. Additionally, I attempted to interrogate the tacit and modernist hierarchies between art and craft, male and female and African and Euro-centric dichotomies implicit in fabric and pattern. This Chapter discusses how the research that was undertaken has shifted how I now view and how and why I make my work.

In order to examine the way in which pattern and cloth is used in three artists' practice I outlined the objectives in Chapter One. I return to the objectives in this Chapter to demonstrate whether I have interrogated the aims that I set out to examine. To show if this was achieved I reiterate the themes that underpinned Shonibare's, Findlay's and my use of pattern and cloth in our works as follows:

The main objectives of this paper were:

- To identify the intentions of three artists' approach to fabric and pattern in their artworks.
- To explore the conceptual value of fabric and pattern.
- To interrogate my subjective response to pattern and textiles.

To achieve the main objectives other objectives have been formulated:

- To compare three artists' use of pattern and textiles.
- To explore why the use of pattern and cloth in three artists' works challenges hierarchies within themes such as the art and craft debate, gender roles, class and racial divides.

- To show how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric in his artworks to illustrate the effect of colonialism on Africa and Europe.
- To explore how and why Shonibare uses batik wax fabric to investigate his position in post-colonial British Fine Art society.
- To depict how and why Findlay's exploration of Tsonga-Shangaan cloth in her Master's dissertation led to the adaptation of Basotho blankets in her works.
- To investigate how and why Basotho blankets function as a reminder of the colonial influence in South Africa.
- To illustrate how and why Findlay depicts her South African identity and surroundings with Basotho blankets.
- To analyse why the use of textiles acts as a descriptor of my surroundings in my paintings.
- To explore how and why my appreciation (subjective and conceptual) of pattern and cloth has changed or developed through this research.
- To examine how and why this research shifts how I view and how and why I make my work.

The research questions, as outlined in Chapter One, were posited so as to assist in exploring the objectives above. To show whether I have addressed the research questions, I reiterate them as follows:

The over-arching question of this research was:

- How does my approach to my painting practice help me understand my appreciation of the complexities of pattern and fabric?

In this research, I endeavoured to investigate the following questions:

- What are the intentions of the artists when they use pattern and fabric?

3. Why and how does Shonibare use batik wax fabric and Findlay use Basotho blankets in their artworks? The artworks that I use in this investigation are:
    - vii. Shonibare's *Double Dutch* (1994), acrylic on Dutch wax printed cotton canvases, 332×588cm overall, each panel measures 32×32×4.5cm.
    - viii. Shonibare's *100 Years* (2008), emulsion and acrylic on Dutch wax printed cotton, and painted wall, 248.9×850.9cm overall, each panel measures 29.8×29.8×5.7cm.
    - ix. Shonibare's *Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour* (1996–1997), reproduction furniture, fire screen, carpet, props, stanchions, Dutch wax printed cotton, measurements vary.
    - x. Findlay's *Basotho Blanket* (2004), oil on canvas, 164×158cm.
    - xi. Findlay's *Basotho Blanket II* (2006), oil and mixed media on canvas, 164×158cm.
    - xii. Findlay's *Blanket Part 1* (2005), intaglio print with hand-painting, 75,5×110cm.
  4. How does this compare to how and why I use domestic textiles in *Indian Cushion* (2016), oil on canvas, 100×100cm; *Namibian Doll* (2013–2016), oil on canvas, 42×59cm; *Persian Carpet with Bag* (2013–2016), mixed media oil on canvas, 75×50cm?
- How does each artist use pattern and fabric to explore its meaning?
3. What does pattern and fabric reveal in each artists work in relation to identity and culture?
  4. How and why do Shonibare and Findlay use fabric and pattern to explore hierarchies of the art and craft debate, which also pertains to gender roles, racial and class divides?
- How does positioning myself in relation to these examples inform my practice and assist me in understanding my work?

6. How and why do I re-appropriate building motifs and patterned textiles in my work so as to explore my subjective preference for pattern, texture and colour?
7. What are the new discoveries that I have made about my work through the investigation of these artists?
8. What changes are there in my work as a consequence of this research in my art?
9. How and why has my appreciation of pattern and fabric developed?
10. Where is the art/craft debate now and how does my work contribute to that debate?

Shonibare's and Findlay's approach to pattern and cloth has helped me discover new ways to explore conceptual dichotomies associated with craft, pattern and textiles as I explain below. This has had a direct influence on the way that I paint and how I think about my painting practice. As a result of exploring these conceptual themes in my practice, my painting has evolved in other ways as well. Through the research into Shonibare's and Findlay's artworks my work has shifted with regard to colour palette and tone, pattern, thickness and texture as well as source material. I will discuss the ways my practice has shifted through the development of texture, thickness and colour in the next section.

## **Dichotomies**

In this section I discuss how my work has shifted through this study, and how positioning myself in relation to these artists has informed my practice and assisted me in understanding my work. I have discovered the conceptual value of fabric and pattern through this research. Shonibare's and Findlay's approach to pattern and fabric has assisted with exploring the hierarchies within culture, art, craft and identity from a conceptual point of view. As a result, I have attempted to explore these binaries. For example, the implicit meaning of pattern and fabric as an identity marker has helped me to investigate the complexity of meaning of fabric and pattern in my work as a descriptor of identity. For instance, the use of clothing in *Nightscene* (2016) (Figure 20) is an attempt to explore personal tastes and reflect on the subject matter which I am drawn to, such as sequins and embroidery sourced from a satchel. As above, this helped me understand that there was another element to my work other than the theoretical aspect, and that is my subjective taste.

The way in which Shonibare and Findlay use pattern and cloth in their artwork to challenge hierarchies with regards to 'high' and 'low' class has helped me discover how fabric and pattern can be used to question preconceptions of the elevation of art over 'kitsch' or popular culture. This has encouraged me to use a craft medium such as textiles in an art process in all of my works. Furthermore, I sometimes use extremely contrasting and vivid colours in my work, as well as items that have sentimental value to me as an example of 'kitsch'. For example, the bedspread in *Bedsread with Mandala* (2016) evokes sentimental memories of feeling safe after I had had a nightmare when I was a child. Additionally, Shonibare's and Findlay's examples have motivated me to challenge stereotypes of class and gender roles that is directly connected to hierarchies of art and craft.

Findlay's and Shonibare's work has encouraged me to investigate how pattern and cloth can signify aspects of culture. For instance, I employ items from diverse cultures such as the perceived cultural symbols of the mandala found on the Indian fabric and Western lace in *Bedsread with Mandala* (2016). This has broadened the repertoire of source material, as I use Indian inspired cloths, tablecloths, cushions, *Herero* doll imagery and Persian and kilim carpets in my paintings.

## **Texture**

Through investigating how Shonibare paints on batik wax fabric as a way to challenge perceptions of Modernist Western art in contrast with African art (Harper 2004), it has allowed me to think more deeply about why I paint using different textures and fabric. This has revealed the conceptual value of the materiality of paint and fabric. For example, the connotations of craft that are applied to textiles has excluded fibre from the 'modern readings of art' (Jeffries 2017). This is because certain styles of art are revered while others are looked down upon. Similarly, Findlay uses fabric textures in her paintings to create unease within her works, because they deal with traditionally domestic items and question issues of value (Charlton 2007:13). This is explained through the way in which all three artists use textures that are considered as 'surface decoration' and defined as frivolous and meaningless (Skelly 2017:59, Parker & Pollock 1981:161). I had hoped to highlight the conceptual value of painting using textures and craft media in my painting practice, because 'excess' has become a tool to question cultural, gender and Fine Art canons (Skelly 2017:3).

On the other hand, I paint using diverse textures because I respond intuitively to how it looks and feels on the canvas. Shonibare's approach to painting on batik wax fabric in *Double Dutch* (1994) has motivated me to paint directly onto patterned fabric which were glued onto the canvas. In this way, I have broadened the textural contrasts in my work. This addresses the subjective response that I set out explore in the research and objectives of this dissertation. Furthermore, the change in the texture illustrates how my practice has been assisted by this research.

I have used the sheer cloth in *Nightscene* (2016) (Figure 27) alongside the rough texture of the canvas. This cloth was different in texture from the canvas and it absorbed the paint differently from the way in which the canvas did. The result was that it made me aware of the application of paint on canvas and changed how I imitated the original material (seen in Figure 44). For instance, in some places I deliberately chose to realistically depict the design on the source material of the Indian throw (Figure 47) in *Arabian City* (2016) in some places seen in Figure 34, while in others I selectively chose to vary the design. For example, in some areas of *Arabian City* (2016) (Figure 35) I made the brush marks looser than the original material of the kilim (seen in Figure 48), and I increased the scale of the design.

Findlay's *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) prompted me to glue areas of fabric onto the canvas in *Nightscene* (2016). Additionally, *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) encouraged me to glue things like beads onto *Peacock* (2016) as a way to experiment with textures and other craft items in my work. As a result of the different textures of the beads, it has provided a visual contrast to the paint and canvas surface in my paintings. This enabled me to deliberately experiment with repetition and variety.

### **Thickness**

The thick paint in Shonibare's *100 Years* (2008), highlights the philosophical value that has been placed on Modernist Art styles. For example, the 'primitive' impasto painting would be disregarded in the Fine Art context (Harper 2004, Hynes 2001:62). The conceptual debate of Western and non-Western hierarchies in Shonibare's works has helped me to bring issues to the fore in my painting practice and research, particularly those that surround the art and craft debate.

The use of thick paint in my paintings is also the result of a personal preference for layering and the materiality of the paint. The review of Findlay's *Basotho Blanket II* (2006) has motivated me to use thick paint to explore textures and to experiment with the materiality and viscosity of oil paint. For example, in *Untitled* (2015–2016), I have used impasto paste to thicken the oil paint, which became quite gelatinous in texture. Moreover, I applied a thick section of texture medium in a motif onto the canvas and let that dry in *Untitled* (2015–2016) (as seen in Figure 49). Once it had dried I painted over the raised area with oil paint to give the impression of a distinctly raised area.

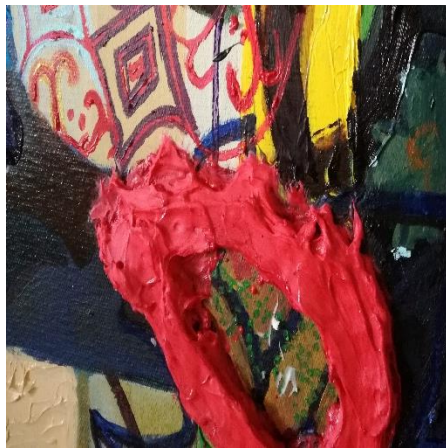


Figure 49. Joanna Smart. (Detail) *Untitled*, 2015–2016. Texture medium and oil paint on canvas.

### Colour palette and tone

The use of colour in Shonibare's and Findlay's artworks to challenge the perception of craft and decoration as 'excessive' (Skelly 2017:1) has shifted how I view colour in my painting practice. I have noted how contemporary artists use colour as a way to question ideas about Fine Art and I use it as a form of decoration in my artworks to challenge how craft and fabric have been conceptually disregarded. For instance, the jarring colours in *Double Dutch* (1994), are used to interrogate the value given to Modernist Minimalist Art (Enwezor 1997) in contrast with the disregard of 'kitsch' art (Skelly 2017:1).

The vivid colours of batik wax fabric in Shonibare's work and use of vivid colour in Findlay's artworks have encouraged me to exaggerate the colours in my work. Additionally, their examples have helped me to explore the use of exaggeration in the work to heighten colour and tonal contrasts. For example, in *Fevered Dreams* (2015) the source material was

quite muted with respect to colour, and as a direct consequence of Shonibare's and Findlay's use of colour I deliberately experimented with saturated colour. For instance, in *Fevered Dreams* (2015), I used Indian yellow which is an intense and transparent yellow and which contrasts dramatically to the original pale Naples yellow hue on the source material.

Furthermore, in *Indian Cushion* (2016) I added a small section of vivid cadmium yellow amongst pale yellow hues. *Indian Cushion* (2016) shows how the research has widened the colour palette in my paintings with regards to colour and tones. Additionally, *Nightscene* (2016) (Figure 27) and *Arabian City* (2016) (Figure 35) illustrates how the range of colour tones has widened, as I have introduced ranges of dark blacks and blues in contrast with bright oranges and yellows. This was a deliberate choice and demonstrates a change in my painting practice as a result of this research (Smart 2016, September 24).

## **Pattern**

The conceptual use of pattern and motifs have been shifted through the investigation into Findlay's and Shonibare's artworks. For instance, the use of pattern as a way to question ideologies of culture, identity, race and art and craft (Skelly 2017:1) has helped me to explore how my work with pattern is more than decoration. This research has provided a reflective way of extracting the philosophical reasons behind the use of pattern in my painting practice. This is due to the use of pattern in contemporary art to question art and craft hierarchies (Skelly 2017:3), which has influenced how I view my artwork.

Similarly, the use of pattern has been broadened in my work. This research has prompted me to exaggerate the sequence and repetition of the original motifs from the source material in my paintings. For example, compared to the original image in Figure 41, the use of pattern in the painting *Stromboli Flats* (2013) has intensified through reviewing Shonibare's work with pattern. I intensified the pattern by using different elements, such as repeated and alternating colours; different scales; slight variations in symmetry and asymmetry; and a variety of textures in glazing and thick paint.

Furthermore, in *Nightscene* (2016) the pattern of the original material (Figure 44) has purposefully been painted in a visibly more energetic way than the source. This was a direct consequence of examining Shonibare's use of intense pattern in *Double Dutch* (1994) and



*100 Years* (2008). I deliberately chose to intensify the pattern to avoid monotony in *Nightscene* (2016) (Figure 27) and *Stromboli Flats* (2013) (Figure 40). In my opinion, I have successfully disrupted the monotony of pattern in *Stromboli Flats* (2013) evident in the original source material (Figure 41).

By reviewing Findlay's and Shonibare's artworks and exploring my painting practice, I have developed a deeper appreciation for the colour and textures of pattern and textiles. This research has encouraged me to explore my interest in the motifs and patterns found on textiles as they have a complexity of meaning to me. Apart from the theoretical interest in textiles and pattern, Findlay's and Shonibare's examples have motivated me to investigate the subjective ways I respond to the colours, tones and textures in pattern and fabric through paint. Furthermore, I realise that an aspect of the appreciation of pattern and fabric lies simply with my individual and intuitive yen for these elements.

Findlay's and Shonibare's use of textiles and pattern in their works has motivated me to explore the notions of the domestic in my work. For example, I now appreciate the artistic value of fabric and pattern which is demonstrated through the use of pattern and cloth in my paintings. This research has made me aware of the conceptual and theoretical value of pattern and cloth which has deepened the appreciation of cloth and pattern in my painting practice.

### **Final exhibition and future research**

This section describes how the final exhibition was used to further interrogate my approach to pattern and fabric. In the exhibition the paintings were grouped in specific ways, the gaps between artworks were adjusted and I painted on the walls. I intended to extend my exploration of paint application and pattern by treating the wall as an additional and relational surface on which to paint. The decision to paint on the surrounding wall was motivated by Derrida's perception of the frame (Derrida 1978). His argument is that the frame, which is also seen as the craft object, is just as important as the artwork within the frame. This is because the frame 'supports the art' (Adamson 2007:20). Furthermore, in the *Truth About Painting* (1978), Derrida philosophises about where the frame ends or begins and questions the 'autonomy of the artwork' that is within the frame (Adamson 2007:13). In this exhibition, I question where the artwork ends or begins by continuing the pattern onto

to the wall of the gallery (Smart 2017, March 14). This implies, to use Adamson's words, 'uncertainty about the boundary' (2007:30) and breaks away from the autonomy of the artwork and Fine Art (Adamson 2007:30), which is intended to create uncertainty about other hierarchies within art and craft and culture (Smart 2017, March 14). Simultaneously, I intended this concept to provoke questions about the constructs and boundaries of the perceptions of art, the artwork, the gallery and the spaces between the artworks (Smart 2017, March 15). Additionally, it is the subjective preference for elements of pattern, colour and texture that encourages me to experiment with my approach to pattern.

The Master's exhibition of my work in the Jack Heath Gallery in October 2017 allowed for experimentation of the grouping of the works (Figure 60). The steps that were taken to showcase how the works were grouped were thought out in the test exhibition seen in Figure 51. The test exhibition presented visual problems, which needed to be resolved. The gaps between paintings seen in Figure 51 were resolved. In my view, there is a much greater visual coherence is noticed in Figure 50 compared to Figure 51. In contrast, some groups of paintings were hung in such a way so as to showcase their inconsistencies, noticed in Figure 52, 53, 54, 59 and 60. This created a tension between the works that were hung to create a square and those that were left with irregular sizes and spaces surrounding the canvases (Spencer 2017, May 15 pers. comms.). Another group of paintings in Figure 59 showcases the grouping of three paintings so that the patterns on each canvas corresponds to the motif on the canvas opposite and below. This was purposefully done so that when hung on the wall it looked like one art work (Smart 2017, September 25).



Figure 50. Joanna Smart, 2017. Installation. Master's exhibition. Photograph by Joanna Smart 2017.

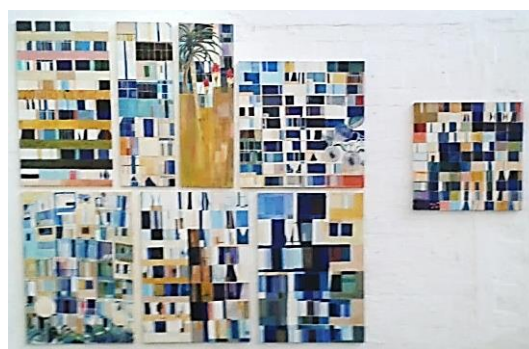


Figure 51. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Test exhibition. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.

In some places I deliberately left the painting on the wall minimal (Figure 53) to contrast with the other areas where the painting on the wall was hard to distinguish from the actual canvas (Figure 58). This allowed experimentation with the varying degrees of pattern within the gallery space (Smart 2017, September 30).

In *Thai Silk Scarf* (2017), holes were cut in the canvas in the shape of paisley tear-drop design. I painted the wall underneath *Thai Silk Scarf* (shown in Figure 57) to experiment with layers in the exhibition and to continue with painting on the wall so that the gallery space became part of my exhibition as well. This was intended to experiment with the sense of space of the work and brought into question what was on top and what was underneath (Spencer 2017, May 15. pers. comms.). In comparison, in Figure 59 the impasto area created a tension between the flat areas of the wall, the flat areas of the canvas painting and the impasto painting on the canvas (Smart 2017, September 28).



Figure 52. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Master's exhibition. Photograph by Joanna Smart 2017.



Figure 53. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Photograph by Angus Forbes, 2017.



Figure 54. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 55. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 56. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Photograph by Angus Forbes, 2017.



Figure 57. Joanna Smart, 2017. Detail of *Thai Silk Scarf* in Installation. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.





Figure 58. Joanna Smart, 2017 detail of *Prayer Mat* in installation. Photograph by Joanna Smart, 2017.



Figure 59. Joanna Smart, 2017 Installation. Photograph by Angus Forbes, 2017.

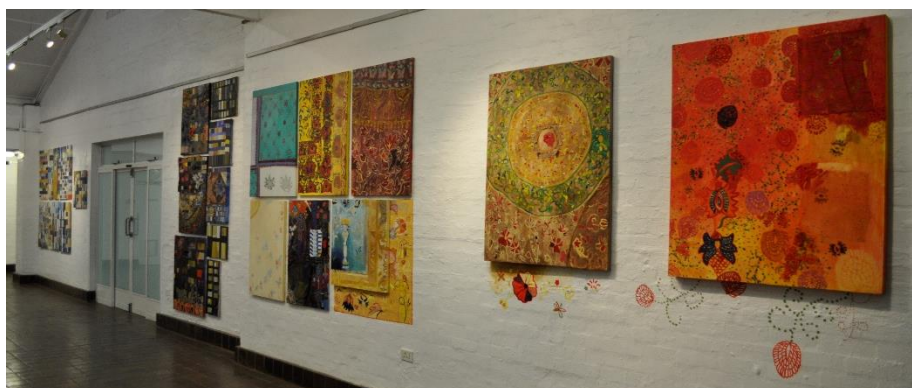


Figure 60. Joanna Smart, 2017. Master's exhibition in the Jack Heath Gallery. Photograph by Angus Forbes, 2017.

This research has helped me understand that there are further questions related to this study that would be worth exploring. For example, to what extent can I broaden the use of texture in my work? For instance, what would materials like sand, leather or felt cloth lend to an experimentation of how the paint application responds to different textures? How could I further develop my painting practice with vivid colours as an exploration of pattern and cloth? For instance, how could I shift the use of tones in my work so that they exaggerate the colours of the source material? Which other artists could I investigate to gather insights into how I could further develop my painting approach? How would the documentation of my response to pattern and cloth before and during the painting process shift how I view and how I make work? What other modes of display are available for me to test out the pattern in my work? This research has thus generated further questions which may go some way in deepening my artistic practice with respect to pattern and fabric.

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